

Anne of Avonlea

A Comedy in Three Acts

Dramatized from L. M. Montgomery's
Novel of the Same Name

by Jeanette Carlisle

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A SAMUEL FRENCH ACTING EDITION



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ANNE OF AVONLEA

STORY OF THE PLAY

Here is the first dramatization of L. M. Montgomery's famous novel which has been read and loved by millions since its publication more than thirty years ago. The play is in one simple living-room set, with most of the characters young ones, and should appeal particularly to clubs, schools and churches. Its heroine is the same adorable little red-headed vixen whose acquaintance so many of you have made in "Anne of Green Gables." But the little girl of "Green Gables" has become a grown-up school teacher of seventeen. How she faces and overcomes the first real problems of her life form the basis of Miss Carlisle's faithful adaptation, of which it may be said, as Meredith Nicholson said of the original, "A story to lift the spirit and send the pessimist into bankruptcy!" Anne's followers of Green Gable days will be pleased to meet again many old friends: Marilla Cuthbert, Anne's hard-working, spinster guardian, who has come to love Anne with a fierce devotion that surpasses even mother love; crotchety Rachel Lynde, Avonlea's "walking newspaper," who seems to know things before they happen; Gilbert Blythe, who fell in love with Anne as a boy and has never for a moment stopped loving her since; practical, prosaic Diana Barry, since girlhood days Anne's best friend, who now teaches school, too. And there are new friends to make: Mr.

J. A. Harrison, Anne's irascible neighbor, into whose oat fields Anne's cow Dolly persists in straying; Paul Irving, Anne's ten-year-old pupil, who she is quite sure is destined to be a great genius; and many others. The play is a series of homey little incidents—the campaign of the Avonlea Village Improvement Society to beautify the town, Mr. Harrison's somewhat rocky romance, the cow that wouldn't stay sold—but Miss Carlisle has magically blended these into a whole that will capture and hold your interest from curtain to curtain, that will bring you much wholesome laughter and a few sentimental tears, that will make you say of Anne as Mark Twain said, "She is the dearest and most moving and delightful child since the immortal Alice."

CHARACTERS

(In Order of Appearance)

MRS. RACHEL LYNDE, *Avonlea's walking newspaper.*

MARILLA CUTHBERT, *a spinster and guardian of*

ANNE SHIRLEY, *a very young school teacher.*

MR. J. A. HARRISON, *an irate neighbor.*

DIANA BARRY, *Anne's best friend.*

GILBERT BLYTHE, *Anne's beau.*

JANE ANDREWS } *Friends of Anne.*

JULIA BELL }

GERTIE PYE, *the town belle.*

FRED WRIGHT, *Diana's "steady."*

TOMMY GILLIS, *one of Gertie's victims.*

PAUL IRVING, *a pupil of Anne's.*

SARAH LYNDE, *Rachel's daughter.*

EMILY HARRISON, *a surprise package.*

SYNOPSIS OF ACTS

The action of the entire play takes place in the parlor of "Green Gables," Miss Marilla Cuthbert's home in the village of Avonlea, on Prince Edward Island, off the east coast of Canada.

ACT I. *Afternoon of a day in early autumn in the year of 1908.*

ACT II.

SCENE I. *Several weeks later.*
Saturday morning.

SCENE II. *Several weeks later.*
Saturday afternoon.

ACT III.

SCENE I. *One week later. Evening.*

SCENE II. *The following day. Sunday afternoon.*



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DESCRIPTION OF CHARACTERS

RACHEL is a woman in her fifties. She is short and plump, very red-faced, and wears her hair in a bun on top of her head. She speaks in a sharp, clipped voice, and has never been known to smile in the memory of man. Has a very nervous manner, can't sit still a minute, and doesn't walk, but "bounces."

MARILLA is a woman of about fifty. She is tall and rather gaunt in appearance, but has a nice face and lovely, iron-grey hair. She is constantly trying to be severe in her relations with others, but is usually betrayed by her innate goodness and her fine sense of humor.

ANNE is a girl of seventeen. She is short and wispy in appearance and her hair is flaming red in hue. She speaks in a vibrant, throaty voice and brings zest and enthusiasm to everything she does. Her features are irregular, and people are inclined to think her plain at first sight, but sooner or later they come to believe her beautiful, not realizing that this is a beauty of spirit, rather than of looks.

MR. HARRISON is a man of forty-five. He is short and dumpy and bald, except for a little fringe around the edges. Like many short men, he is extremely pugnacious; he blusters and bullies, and attempts to browbeat everyone with whom he comes in contact.

DIANA is a girl of seventeen. She should, if possible, be a direct contrast in type to Anne; short and

8 DESCRIPTION OF CHARACTERS

rather plump, attractive, regular features, and extremely calm and prosaic about everything she does.

GILBERT is a boy of eighteen. He is tall and well set-up, with dark, wavy hair and a good-looking face. He is a calm, unruffled spirit, with a good deal of poise and more than ample intelligence for his age. He shows, by every look and action, that he dotes on Anne.

JANE is a girl of seventeen. She is of medium height and build, rather nice-looking in an undistinguished way; entirely normal and healthy and "average."

JULIA is Jane's inseparable companion and entirely like her in every way. In fact, these two parts might easily be played by twins.

GERTIE is a girl of eighteen. She is very attractive in a rather obvious way. Has a reputation as the town belle, which she is constantly trying to justify.

FRED is a boy of eighteen. He is a pleasant-looking chap, rather short and stocky, with a cheerful personality. The quiet, plodding type that gets there in the end.

TOMMY is a boy of nineteen. He is gawky and quite homely, but commands respect as the son of one of the town's wealthiest citizens.

PAUL is a boy of ten. He is short for his age, and extremely good-looking and intelligent. The director should be careful to keep this part toned down, as he must not seem to be overly precocious.

SARAH is a girl of sixteen. She is rather plain looking, a normal girl of her years.

EMILY is a woman of thirty-five. She is quite attractive, and has a strong, hearty personality, with just a little of the shrew in her.

Anne Of Avonlea

ACT ONE

THE TIME: *Afternoon on a September day, in the year nineteen hundred eight.*

THE PLACE: *The parlor at "Green Gables," the home of Miss Marilla Cuthbert in the village of Avonlea, Prince Edward Island, off the east coast of Canada. The room is supremely neat and tidy. A visitor would be at a loss to so much as find a pin out of its proper place. The furniture is worn and old-fashioned, the large pieces being of the horsehair-stuffed variety. The main entrance to the room is a large archway midway in the back wall; this leads, on the Left, to the front door, and on the Right, to the stairway to the upper floor; neither front door nor stairway, however, needs to be visible from the auditorium. Another door, upstage in the Right wall, leads to the kitchen and dining room. There is a large bay window midway in the Left wall; in front of this a window seat. Downstage in the Right wall a fireplace with mantel above it. Outside the arch, against the backing, an old-fashioned bureau and mirror; next to this a clothes tree. Against the back wall, Right of arch, a long table; on this table a rubber plant. Left of the arch, near the back wall, two up-*

holstered straight chairs. Facing the fireplace, one downstage and one upstage of it, two arm-chairs. A large sofa stage Center. Against the Left wall, well downstage, a Governor Winthrop secretary and straight chair. Kerosene lamps on the secretary, mantel and table. Starched white antimacassars on the chairs and sofa. Books, pictures, vases, etc.

AT RISE: *The stage is empty, and we hear the sound of knocking coming from offstage L.*

RACHEL. (*From off L.*) Marilla! Marilla Cuthbert! (*Comes flouncing on c. from L. She is wearing hat and coat, and has her hands stuck inside a little moth-eaten muff*) Marilla! Yoo-hoo, Marilla! (*Looks around, then goes marching across stage with her quick, energetic little steps and exits R., calling*) Marilla—where are you? (*Re-enters immediately, crosses to arch and, looking off R., calls*) Marilla! Ma-riiil-laaaa!

MARILLA. (*Enters R. She is wearing a stiffly-starched apron over her black dress*) Goshen! Leave off hollering, Rachel, before you bring the Avonlea Fire Volunteers.

RACHEL. Well, where you been? A person should ought to be at home when a person calls of an afternoon.

MARILLA. Didn't know you were calling, did I? 'Sides, I been chasing that settin' Plymouth of mine. That Plymouth is the wandering-est fowl I ever did see, and I'll testify to that. Well, sit down, Rachel, now you're here.

RACHEL. M'mm! (*Bounces down to sofa. Sits on edge of it and taps her foot impatiently while MARILLA comes down more leisurely and sits in chair upstage of fireplace*) Where's Anne—? (*Leans eag-*

erly over the side of the sofa) —and how'd she get along in the school?

MARILLA. (*Smiles mischievously*) Don't you know that?

RACHEL. Me? *Me?* Now, how'd I know that? This is Anne's first day teaching at Avonlea School, and I haven't seen the child since yesterday tea, so how'd I know that?

MARILLA. Always thought you knew everything.

RACHEL. (*Sniffs indignantly*) Well, if you're going to take that attitude, Marilla—

MARILLA. Only this morning Anne said, "If you went to your own room at midnight, pulled down the blind and *sneezed*—Mrs. Rachel Lynde would ask you the next day how your cold was!"

RACHEL. (*A little hurt*) Did Anne say *that* about me?

MARILLA. (*Nods*) I'll testify to it.

RACHEL. Bet she didn't. She likes me too much to be so disrespectful. Bet you made that up yourself, Marilla Cuthbert. Where is Anne? I'll ask her.

MARILLA. Not to home yet.

RACHEL. She isn't? Why not? School's been out over half an hour. What's she doing?

MARILLA. I'm sure *she* knows that.

RACHEL. (*Disappointedly*) I did want to hear about her first day teaching. And I can't stay long. Have to see Mrs. Preacher Allan about that Church Social we're running.

MARILLA. Goshen! If you ever came here to *see* me, Rachel, 'stead of to find *out* something—I do believe I'd die of the shock.

RACHEL. (*With a toss of the head*) Now, who'd want to see a sour-faced old spinster like you? Not me!

MARILLA. Suppose it's lucky I've got Anne Shirley living with me—else I'd *never* have a visitor.

RACHEL. (*Nods crisply*) You never said a truer

word! I've known you since we was girls, Marilla, so I can say it: when your brother Mathew—

MARILLA. God bless his soul!

RACHEL. —brought little Anne here an orphan—ten years ago now it is—that's the luckiest thing ever happened to you.

MARILLA. (*Her face breaks into a tender smile*) That's one time you're right, Rachel.

RACHEL. (*Smiles reminiscently*) Remember how you wanted to make Mathew give her back to the orphanage?

MARILLA. How could I've been such a *fool*? And you remember how you encouraged me to—saying she was a red-headed little vixen and would never come to any good?

RACHEL. (*Indignantly*) I never said such a thing. We was fast friends from the very first minute—

MARILLA. (*With a chuckle*) Anne didn't think so.

RACHEL. 'Course, she *has* got a deal of vinegar in that tongue of hers—

MARILLA. And a temper—

RACHEL. But her heart's as warm as a coal stove when it gets red hot—that's what.

MARILLA. Well, Goshen, you don't have to convince me about Anne's goodness.

RACHEL. And now she's grown up—and a teacher. Lor', Marilla! Don't the years fly by?

MARILLA. (*With a sigh*) They do, Rachel—they do!

RACHEL. (*After a slight pause*) Wish she'd hurry—Mrs. Preacher Allan's a stickler for promptness. (*Taps her foot nervously for a few moments, then bounces up and across to the window. Kneels on the window seat, pulls the curtain to one side and peers out.*)

MARILLA. (*Smiles*) Now what?

RACHEL. There's your neighbor, Mr. J. A. Har-

rison—on the porch fast asleep! Mark my words, Marilla: *he'll* come to no good.

MARILLA. (*A little annoyed*) Now, how do you know that? You've never spoken a single word to him.

RACHEL. (*Snaps back*) Have, too!

MARILLA. Goshen! *Already?* He only moved in day before yesterday.

RACHEL. (*Peering busily out the window*) Saw him yesterday, after I left here. Asked him for a contribution to the Social.

MARILLA. (*Shakes her head admiringly*) Well, I certainly declare! Got to hand it to you, Rachel, for never missing a *chance*.

RACHEL. (*Bounces down from the window and sits on the window seat*) I wish you could've seen that house, Marilla—it was enough to make a person shudder.

MARILLA. Dirty?

RACHEL. *Dirty?* Well, it's just a mercy Mrs. Robert Bell is safe in her grave. It would have broken her heart to see the state her house is in now.

MARILLA. Mrs. Bell was the clean one, that's a fact.

RACHEL. Why, she scrubbed the kitchen floor every second day. And if you could see it now! I had to hold up my skirts as I walked across it.

MARILLA. How could he have gotten the house so dirty in *two* days?

RACHEL. (*Significantly*) He's a bachelor!

MARILLA. Oh!

RACHEL. Or so he says. *And* he's a New Brunswick man.

MARILLA. What of it? Goshen, to hear you talk, Rachel, you'd think if a person wasn't born right here on Prince Edward Island, they're dirt.

RACHEL. And you'd be right most of the time—

'specially with a Brunswicken. They're most as bad as *Yankees!*

MARILLA. I've known one or two Yankees I liked.

RACHEL. *I haven't!* And the temper of your Mr. J. A. Harrison— Lor' me! Probably gets it from that parrot of his. Did you know he keeps a parrot, Marilla?

MARILLA. Yes, name of Ginger. He told me.

RACHEL. (*Jealously*) Have *you* talked to him, too?

MARILLA. I have.

RACHEL. (*Deflated*) Oh! Then you know all about him, o' course.

MARILLA. (*Smiles*) Not *II* Matter of fact, he was only over for a minute, to complain about the Jersey cow trampling his field. Did you get the contribution for the Social?

RACHEL. (*Indignantly*) I did not! Talk about being close! Why, Deacon Broome was in to see him about subscribing to Preacher Allan's salary, and you know what Mr. J. A. Harrison told him?

MARILLA. Now, how would I know that?

RACHEL. He told him he'd wait and see how many dollars' worth of good he got out of his preaching first!

MARILLA. (*With a chuckle*) He said that?

RACHEL. Said *he* didn't believe in buying a pig in a poke!

MARILLA. 'Pears he's got a sense of humor, anyway.

RACHEL. Don't tell me! Avonlea 'll be sorry yet for the day he ever moved in.

ANNE. (*Enters c. from L., flinging her coat carelessly onto the clothes tree*) Marilla, tell me— Oh, good afternoon, Rachel!—tell me, do I look any *different?*

MARILLA. (*Scrutinizes her carefully*) Well— there's a smudge of something on the tip of your nose—probably chalk.

ANNE. Oh, no, Marilla! I mean *spiritually*!

MARILLA. I wouldn't know about that.

ANNE. Because for years I've been dreaming about being a teacher, and now today I actually am one, and yet really I feel very little different. Isn't it *disappointing*?

MARILLA. One swallow doesn't make a summer, Anne. Bet you'll feel like a teacher time this year's over.

ANNE. I suppose you're right.

RACHEL. Late, aren't you, Anne?

ANNE. (*Crosses down and sits on the arm of MARILLA'S chair*) Oh, no. I had to keep one or two of the children after school, Rachel.

RACHEL. Bad, were they? Hope you gave 'em a good caning.

ANNE. (*Horried*) Why, I wouldn't do *that*! Strike one of my children, Rachel?

RACHEL. Why not? Put the fear in 'em. That's what they need—show 'em who's boss right off. You wouldn't have to do it often.

ANNE. (*Hotly*) I won't have to do it at all. I plan to teach by *leading*, Rachel, not by *ruling*. It's up to me to win the confidence of my children, and you can't win confidence with a birch rod.

RACHEL. Spare that rod and spoil the child—that's the way they taught it in *my* day.

MARILLA. Yes, but your day—and mine—is a long time past, Rachel. Don't forget that.

RACHEL. Don't tell me! The old ways are still the best.

ANNE. (*Reproachfully*) Why, Marilla!

MARILLA. (*Smiles wryly*) Now what?

ANNE. You aren't wearing your glasses!

MARILLA. Oh, I forgot!

ANNE. (*Rises*) Where are they, Marilla?

MARILLA. In the secretory, I expect.

ANNE. (*Crossing to the secretary*) You know

what the Doctor said—that you've got to wear them *all* the time—not just for reading.

MARILLA. Well, Goshen, isn't a person allowed a *few* mistakes?

ANNE. (*Getting the glasses out of the secretary*) Not when a person's health is concerned, Marilla. Then even a few mistakes are too many. (*Crosses back to MARILLA'S chair and slips the glasses over her eyes*) There you are, and just see that it doesn't happen again. (*Pats her head fondly.*)

MARILLA. (*Squirms*) Quit fussin', can't you? Don't like being *mauled*!

ANNE. Oh, very well—if that's the way you feel. (*Crosses and sits in divan.*)

RACHEL. How'd you find your class, Anne?

ANNE. Why, it's too soon to tell yet, of course, Rachel, but they seem, all of them, like dears.

RACHEL. *Dears?* (*Snorts*) Don't tell me! A parcel of brats, I'll wager. All children are brats. I sometimes think the Lord made 'em that way o' purpose. To try the patience of us grown folks here on earth.

ANNE. But isn't it almost frightening when you think, Rachel, that one of those brats, as you call them—perhaps someone who sat in my classroom today—may grow up to be somebody special, perhaps even a *genius*?

RACHEL. There's no such thing—not in these days.

ANNE. There *may* be.

RACHEL. A genius—in Avonlea? Who, I'd like to know? That unwashed little sulker, Anthony Pye, I suppose?

ANNE. Anthony *did* seem a little difficult today. But I'll make him my friend yet—you'll see.

RACHEL. If you do, Anne, you'll be the only friend he's got—and that even includes his Ma and Pa.

MARILLA. (*Shakes her head wonderingly*) Rachel, you do beat everything for contrariness.

ANNE. (*Smiles*) Oh, Rachel made her reputation a long time ago, and she feels she's *always* got to live up to it.

RACHEL. (*Tosses her head*) Rubbish! I can't see how your class can be so good with the children of all them *foreigners* in it.

MARILLA. Foreigners in Avonlea, Rachel?

RACHEL. There's that Bowers family moved down from Newbridge last summer—

MARILLA. (*Smiles*) Oh!

RACHEL. They've got a brat school age, haven't they, Anne?

ANNE. Yes.

RACHEL. Then there's those Connells—the ones that used to live in White Sands—

ANNE. There are two Connell children in my class.

RACHEL. That Mrs. Connell, Marilla—the airs she does put on! (*Rolls her eyes heavenward*) Just because her husband's a Boer War pensioner. Wants everyone to call her *Connell*. Well, I'll call her *Connell* if she busts!

ANNE. (*Laughing*) There's one "foreign" child in my class you seem to have overlooked, Rachel—

RACHEL. (*Eagerly*) Who? Who'd I overlook?

ANNE. Not only is he a "foreigner"—he's a *Yankee*!

RACHEL. Oh, I know *him*! Father's name is Mr. Edward Irving. Moved in two weeks ago last Thursday. From Boston. Writes books—and gets paid for them. And keeps a servant in the house *all* the time!

ANNE. (*Laughs*) And I thought I was telling *you* something!

RACHEL. Bet you'll have your hands full with *that* brat.

ANNE. On the contrary, Paul Irving seems to be an exceptionally nice boy.

RACHEL. Don't tell me about Yankees! They all seem exceptionally nice till the very minute they stick a knife in your back.

ANNE. You're incorrigible, Rachel!

RACHEL. Maybe so— (*Rises*) But take a bit of advice from someone a deal older 'n you, Anne, and keep your eyes on that Irving brat *all* the time. I'll be late for my appointment with Mrs. Preacher Allan. (*Turns to cross.*)

ANNE. (*Rises*) I'll be late, too. I'm having the A. V. I. S. for tea, Marilla.

RACHEL. (*Stops short in the act of crossing to arch and turns*) Why—what's that, Anne?

MARILLA. (*Humorously*) Even *I* know that, Rachel. It stands for "Avonlea Village Improvement Society."

RACHEL. Oh, sure! Just didn't recognize the initials.

ANNE. We're having the first meeting here to-day.

RACHEL. Suppose you know what you're doing, Anne, but take my advice and leave well enough alone, or you'll get into no end of hot water. People don't like being improved.

ANNE. Oh, we're not going to try to improve the *people*. It's Avonlea itself. There are lots of things that might be done to make it prettier—

MARILLA. (*Nods*) There certainly are.

ANNE. For instance, Rachel, if we could coax Mr. Levi Boulter to pull down that dreadful house on his upper farm, wouldn't that be an improvement?

RACHEL. It certainly would. But if you Improvers can coax Levi Boulter to do anything for the public when there isn't a nickel of profit in it for him—may I be there to see and hear the process, that's what!

ANNE. We can *try*; just that will be some satisfaction to us.

RACHEL. Suppose you got the "improving" idea out of some rubbishy Yankee magazine. But there, I know you'll go ahead with it if you've set your heart to it.

MARILLA. She will!

RACHEL. Lor', Marilla! Don't the time just fly by? Seems I haven't been here talking hardly a minute, and I'm late already! Goodbye! (*Hustles across to arch*) Let me know how the meeting turns out, Anne. Goodbye! (*Bounces out c. to L.*)

ANNE. (*Laughing*) Dear Mrs. Rachel Lynde! A person meeting her for the first time would swear she hadn't a charitable thought in her life, and they'd be so wrong! (*Comes down and sits on the arm of MARILLA'S chair again.*)

MARILLA. (*Reaching up and finding ANNE'S hand*) Rachel 'd be mad if anyone said she *did* have a charitable thought.

ANNE. Of course she would. But isn't she a dear?

MARILLA. "Dear" is hardly the word for her. But never mind about Rachel now. Was school really so nice, Anne?

ANNE. Oh, Marilla! (*A dreamy glint in her eyes*) Now we're alone I can tell you! Nice? It's the very nicest thing in all the world, teaching is. Just think: it's almost God-like—and I don't mean that sacrilegiously, of course—being given so much raw material for success, and being able to mould it in almost any way you desire—

MARILLA. Goshen! Sounds a little frightening to me.

ANNE. It is, when I think how much harm I can do—or how much good! (*Her head thrown back, oratorically*) Why, right now I may be inspiring one youthful heart and mind with high and lofty am-

bitions—perhaps shaping the destinies of some future statesman—

MARILLA. (*The practical one*) Statesman? Who would that be, Anne—not Anthony Pye?

ANNE. Perhaps! Who can tell? Don't you see, not being sure is what makes it so exciting.

MARILLA. Oh, I see.

ANNE. But I believe I *do* know, Marilla—

MARILLA. Know which one is going to be a statesman? That *is* interesting.

ANNE. *Something* great, at any rate. He is marked for it, my intuition tells me so. He's such a little gentleman—blue-black curls, and the handsomest face—and *so* polite in everything he does—

MARILLA. Dear me! Who's this?

ANNE. The one we talked of before—Paul Irving!

MARILLA. Goshen! The Yankee?

ANNE. And still not at all effeminate; he's already had to lick pugnacious young Timmy Boulter in self-defense—

MARILLA. (*Smiles*) Sounds like a cross between a prize-fighter and an angel!

ANNE. I expect him to visit here quite often, and I'm sure you'll love him, too, Marilla.

MARILLA. (*Teasingly*) A favorite already, Anne? Isn't that contrary to the modern rules of teaching you learned at Queens?

ANNE. (*Seriously*) Oh, I shall have no favorites in class. But you can't instruct your heart not to pick and choose, can you, Marilla?

MARILLA. (*Patting ANNE'S cheek*) No, Anne—no, you can't. (*Sighs, then after a slight pause, rises*) If your "A. V. I. S." is coming for tea, I'd better see about getting some jam ready, and warming up some bread.

ANNE. I'll do it, Marilla. You shouldn't be work-

ing so much. You know the eye doctor told you to get lots of rest—

MARILLA. Work? (*Snorts*) Since when has warming a little bread on top of the stove been work? 'Sides, I'm not an invalid, and I'm not going to let you make one of me.

ANNE. But I could do it just as easily as you—

MARILLA. No, this is a special day for you. Somehow, I feel it wouldn't be *right* for you to be messing around a kitchen today.

ANNE. (*Smiles*) Very well—if you insist. I'll sit here and study my Virgil until they come.

MARILLA. Suit yourself. But what you think you can learn from some Eyetalian who's been dead two thousand years beats me! (*Exits R.*)

ANNE. (*Crosses to secretary, gets a small volume from it, comes down and curls up on the sofa. Opens the volume, finds her place and begins earnestly to read, her lips forming toneless words. After a few moments, her mind begins to wander. She rises and throws the book on the sofa. She is transformed immediately into an "old woman," and totters across to meet an imaginary visitor. She curtsies to him and takes his imaginary hand. In an "old" voice*) Why, how do you do, Mr. Irving? It's nice to see you again after so many years.—I never thought you'd remember your old teacher.—What? You've never forgotten.—That is a pretty sentiment, my dear boy—particularly now that you're Prime Minister of all Britain.—You say you owe it all—all your success to me?—Oh, come now—I'm sure one or two others may have contributed *something*— (*MR. HARRISON enters angrily c. from L., and stands in the arch, unnoticed by ANNE.*) You'd like to kiss my brow, Mr. Irving?—Very well, I'm sure I'd consider it an honor— (*Bends her head forward to be "kissed."*)

MR. HARRISON. (*Who has been taking this in with a rising look of disgust*) Harrumph!

ANNE. (*Starts*) Oh! Why—why, Mr. Harrison!

MR. HARRISON. (*Angrily*) Yes, yes, yes!

ANNE. (*Very confused*) Oh, why—what must you think?

MR. HARRISON. I'd rather not say, my dear!

ANNE. The fact is, I was entertaining the Prime Minister of— I mean— (*Attempts a smile*) I'm afraid I don't make myself very clear.

MR. HARRISON. You most certainly do not!

ANNE. Well— (*Pulling herself together*) I've usually found in cases like this it's best not to say anything at all. Pray, will you be seated, Mr. Harrison?

MR. HARRISON. I will not!

ANNE. Then what can I do for you, sir?

MR. HARRISON. (*Crossing down to her*) I'll tell you what! I'm not going to put up with this—not a day longer, do you hear, Miss?

ANNE. With what—?

MR. HARRISON. Bless my soul, this is the third time, Miss—the third time! Patience has ceased to be a virtue, Miss—

ANNE. (*Trying to get a word in*) But, sir—

MR. HARRISON. (*Speaking right through her*) I warned your aunt the last time not to let it occur again, and she's let it—she's done it! What does she mean by it, that's what I want to—

ANNE. (*Shouting to make herself heard*) Please! (*Taken by surprise, he stops*) Now, then— (*In her most dignified manner*) Will you kindly explain what the trouble is?

MR. HARRISON. Trouble, is it? Bless my soul, trouble enough, I should think. The trouble is, Miss, that I found that Jersey cow of your aunt's in my oats again, not ten minutes ago—

ANNE. Dear me!

MR. HARRISON. The third time, mark you! I found her in the day before yesterday, and I found her in yesterday. Where's your aunt, Miss? I just want to see her for a minute and give her a piece of my mind—a piece of J. A. Harrison's mind, Miss!

ANNE. If you mean Miss Marilla Cuthbert, she is *not* my aunt—

MR. HARRISON. Eh?

ANNE. And she is busy in the kitchen, and may not be disturbed. (*Increasing in dignity with every word*) I am very sorry that my cow should have broken into your oats. She *is* my cow, and not Miss Cuthbert's—Matthew gave her to me three years ago when she was a little calf and he bought her from Mr. Bell—

MR. HARRISON. Sorry, Miss! Sorry isn't going to help matters any. You'd better go and look at the havoc that animal has made in my oats—trampled them from centre to circumference, Miss.

ANNE. (*Firmly*) I am *very* sorry, but perhaps if you kept your fences in better repair, Dolly might not have broken in.

MR. HARRISON. (*Angrier than ever at her carrying the war into his own country*) But, but! Eh? My fence, is it? The *jail* fence couldn't keep a demon of a cow like that out—

ANNE. I think—

MR. HARRISON. *I* think, you red-headed snippet, that if the cow *is* yours, you'd be better employed in watching her than in those insane antics you were engaged in when I entered here.

ANNE. (*He has touched her tender point*) I'd rather have red hair than none at all, except a little fringe around my ears!

MR. HARRISON. (*Speechless*) Eh—eh—!

ANNE. (*Magnanimously*) I can make allowance for you, Mr. Harrison, because I have imagination. I can easily imagine how very trying it must be to

find a cow in your oats, and I promise you that Dolly shall not be guilty again. I give you my word of honor on *that* point.

MR. HARRISON. Well—well— (*Lamely*) See that she isn't, Miss. (*Turns and crosses up to arch. Then he turns and glares at her; she glares back. They stand there thus for a moment, then suddenly they BOTH break forth in peals of laughter*) Oh, he, he, he, Miss! Oh, he, he, he!

ANNE. Aren't people *funny*, Mr. Harrison?

MR. HARRISON. Very few of them are as funny as J. A. Harrison, I'll warrant!

ANNE. Or as Anne Shirley!

MR. HARRISON. You have got a temper, Miss, and that's a fact.

ANNE. I know, and it does me no good except to make me heartily ashamed of myself.

MR. HARRISON. You shouldn't ought to be. I like a female, Miss, that'll stand up and crow once in a while. Makes me think the distaff side isn't all to the bad.

ANNE. I take it you aren't very fond of women, then?

MR. HARRISON. You take it correctly. Never knew but one before I could cotton to—and she's a parrot.

ANNE. Oh, I've heard about Ginger, sir.

MR. HARRISON. (*Pleased*) Have you?

ANNE. And I'd like to visit her sometime, if I may. There hasn't, in my memory, ever been another parrot in Avonlea.

MR. HARRISON. Why, certain, Miss, certain. Come and call any time you've a mind to it. And unless I miss my guess, Ginger and you'll get along real well together. Two of a kind, Miss, you know.

ANNE. Thank you, Mr. Harrison. I shall be happy to accept your invitation.

MR. HARRISON. It'll be my pleasure, Miss. And—

(*Hesitates*) Will you tell me one thing very confidential?

ANNE. Why, certainly—if I can.

MR. HARRISON. It's been consuming me ever since I walked in the door. Who was it you was lettin' kiss you on the brow?

ANNE. Oh! (*Holds her hands up to her face*) They'll be the death of me yet!

MR. HARRISON. What will, Miss?

ANNE. My day dreams!

MR. HARRISON. Is *that* what you were doing—day-dreaming?

ANNE. To my mortification—yes!

MR. HARRISON. Well, now—no mortification about that, Miss—none whatever. I'll let you in on a little secret, if you promise not to tell.

ANNE. I promise.

MR. HARRISON. (*Leans over and whispers in her ear*) I—dream—myself!

ANNE. (*Wide-eyed*) Do you *really*?

MR. HARRISON. (*Nods*) Sure as shooting! Hours on end sometimes, Miss, on afternoons like this. And the crazy things that happen in them! So crazy, I'd be ashamed to own up to them. But do you know, it's—bless my soul, Miss—it's fun, that's what it is!

ANNE. (*Happily*) Isn't it, though? And, Mr. Harrison, I've just had a very unusual thought.

MR. HARRISON. What's that, Miss?

ANNE. At least, I think it's unusual. First impressions ought *never* to be trusted, because if they were, you and I would probably go through life being fast enemies, instead of the fast friends I'm sure we shall be.

MR. HARRISON. Bless you, we shall indeed, Miss Ann—if I might make so bold as to call you that.

ANNE. Of course you may. I'm pleased to have all my friends call me Anne.

MR. HARRISON. You come across the road when—

ever the urge strikes you. I've one or two stories up my sleeve you may not find too dull. I must be off now. Bless me, Avonlea may not be such a bad place after all.

ANNE. It isn't. And I'll try to keep Dolly from your field, Mr. Harrison.

MR. HARRISON. Don't fret. If she comes in, I'll just shoo her back home. (*KNOCKING is heard from off L.*) Don't trouble yourself, Miss—I'll let 'em in. (*Exits C. to L.*)

GILBERT. (*Enters almost immediately with DIANA, C. from L.*) Hello, Anne!

DIANA. How are you, Anne, dear?

ANNE. (*Rushing between them and taking their hands in hers*) Diana and Gilbert! I'm so happy to see you both!

GILBERT. Are we the first ones, Anne?

DIANA. I hope we are!

ANNE. Yes, you're the first of the A. V. I. S.'s! (*Looks from one to the other, then, taking a dramatic stance*) Gilbert Blythe and Diana Barry—my two very dearest friends! How happy I am that we three should be here together on this afternoon!

DIANA. (*Matter-of-factly*) Why?

ANNE. *Why?* Why, Diana? How can you be so *practical*? This, I might say, is the first day of my new life. It's the first day of the new lives of all of us!

(GILBERT smiles.)

DIANA. Oh, you're referring to the fact that we all started teaching today. Is *that* what excites you?

ANNE. Well, isn't that enough to excite anyone?

DIANA. Teaching is just a *job* to me—a means to an end, you might put it.

ANNE. *What* end?

DIANA. Why—making a living!

ANNE. Making a living? Is that the only reason you entered the honorable profession of teaching, Diana?

DIANA. Frankly, Anne, I can think of no other.

ANNE. (*Gasps*) Oh! Isn't she the *limit*, Gilbert! If all teachers were like you, Diana, there wouldn't be a bit of ambition in the world. Isn't she just the limit?

GILBERT. (*Smiling*) Well—yes and no! If all teachers were like *you*, Anne, there'd be too *much* ambition in the world.

ANNE. How can there be too much ambition?

GILBERT. It's rather like sugar candy for children. A little is good for the bones, but too much brings on the stomachache. So perhaps it's just as well there's a balance between your kind of teacher, Anne, and Diana's.

(DIANA and ANNE look at each other and smile.)

DIANA. Gilbert seems to have settled it.

ANNE. Yes, but I still think I'm right, and you still think you're right, so there! Well, how was your class at Highbridge, Diana?

DIANA. (*Shrugs*) Like most classes, I suppose. A number of children not wanting particularly to be taught, and I having to teach them.

ANNE. (*Smiles*) I'm not going to quarrel with you today, Diana. How was *your* class at White Sands, Gilbert?

GILBERT. Why, I believe I shall get along with them well enough.

ANNE. Of course! You'll *always* get along well enough, Gilbert. In all things.

GILBERT. (*Significantly*) No. In some things, perhaps. But in *one* thing—(*Looks at her intently. Confused, she turns away.*)

DIANA. (*After a slight pause*) How is Marilla's health today, Anne?

ANNE. She seems quite well, thank you, Diana. If she'd only remember to wear her glasses all the time, as the Doctor told her. Her eyes are not what they should be, you know.

DIANA. Is she not at home now?

ANNE. Yes, in her kitchen, where she usually is.

DIANA. Then I'll just go in and say hello to her.
(*Exits R.*)

ANNE. (*After a slight pause, crosses, kneels on window seat and looks out the window*) How lovely it is! (*Sighs happily*) Aren't we fortunate to be alive and well and happy—in such a lovely world!

GILBERT. (*Crosses and sits on window seat*) I'm fortunate particularly.

ANNE. (*Still looking out window*) Why particularly, Gilbert?

GILBERT. To be so close to you!

ANNE. (*Turns and faces him; holds her hands to her mouth, laughing*) Oh, Gilbert! I do believe you're being romantic!

GILBERT. (*Makes a wry face*) All right—laugh if you wish, Anne.

ANNE. But how can I help it? To think of anyone—let alone you, Gilbert—being romantic about *me*!

GILBERT. That's not so very difficult. Though you may laugh at me—

ANNE. (*Contritely*) Oh, I *am* sorry, Gilbert! It wasn't you I was laughing at. Only at the *thought* of such a thing. We're so young, Gilbert, and we've been growing up together for so many years. And there's so much we've still to do. Have you forgotten our plans—for college?

GILBERT. No, but you've apparently forgotten our plans—for *after* college.

ANNE. No, I haven't, Gilbert—no, I haven't! And

I'll marry you then, if you still wish me. For I could never love anyone as I love you, Gilbert—

GILBERT. (*Smiles wryly*) As you might love a brother, if you had one?

ANNE. (*Frowns, considering. Gets down from window seat and crosses c.*) Yes, that—and more, too, I think. But I don't know. I'm so young—seven—teen is so young for such things, don't you think?

(*Suddenly, there is a CRY from off R. and the SOUND of a body falling.*)

DIANA. (*Rushes in door R.; agitatedly*) Anne! Gilbert! Come quickly!

ANNE. Heavens! What is it, Diana?

DIANA. Quickly!

(*ALL THREE rush off R. After a moment they re-enter, GILBERT and ANNE supporting MARILLA.*)

MARILLA. (*Who looks quite shaken*) Goshen! I can walk by myself—

GILBERT. Just sit down here and rest for a minute, Miss Marilla. (*They guide her to sofa and sit her down in it.*)

ANNE. (*Anxiously*) Are you all right, Marilla?

MARILLA. Yes, yes—'course I'm all right. Leave me be! (*Slaps at ANNE's hands.*)

ANNE. What happened?

DIANA. She fainted, Anne!

MARILLA. I did no such thing! I—I must've slipped on a potatoe peel and fell.

ANNE. Nobody's peeled potatoes since day before yesterday, Marilla.

DIANA. It looked awfully like fainting to me.

MARILLA. I tell you I didn't, Diana. What'd I want to go and faint for. I'm no invalid. I— (*Winces with pain*) My head!

ANNE. Oh, Marilla! Why *won't* you wear your glasses and be spared all this?

GILBERT. I think we'd better take you upstairs to your bed, Miss Marilla.

MARILLA. You'll not! Nobody's going to make a patient of me.

GILBERT. Patient? Nonsense! A little nap, and you'll feel good as new. Lend me a hand, Anne. *(Takes one of MARILLA'S arms and ANNE takes the other. They lead her, protesting, to arch C.)*

MARILLA. Don't! No! I won't go!

(KNOCKING comes from off L.)

ANNE. Will you see who that is, please, Diana?

DIANA. All right.

ANNE. Come along, Marilla.

(GILBERT and ANNE lead MARILLA off C. to R., while DIANA exits C. to L.)

DIANA. *(Re-enters after a moment with GERTIE, JANE and JULIA)* Just come in, girls.

JANE. Aren't the others here yet?

DIANA. Why, none but Gilbert Blythe, Jane. He's upstairs, helping Anne take care of Marilla.

JULIA. Oh, is she ill, Diana?

DIANA. Yes, she had a fainting spell, Julia. I was in the kitchen and saw it happen.

JULIA. Why, I'm sorry to hear that.

DIANA. It's her eyes, you know. They've been bad for some time, and Anne was worried lest she lose her sight.

JANE. Dear me, I hope not!

GERTIE. Well, we might as well be seated.

DIANA. Yes, do, Gertie.

(GERTIE, JANE and JULIA sit in the sofa, and DIANA on the window seat.)

GERTIE. For a first meeting, the A. V. I. S. hasn't attracted much of a turnout.

DIANA. Why, Fred Wright will be here, I know, and possibly Ham Coulter. It's up to us to make it grow from here, Gertie.

JULIA. Tommy Gillis is coming, too, Diana.

DIANA. Tommy Gillis, too? That is a feather in our caps. With his father's prestige, we should be able to do all manner of things. But I never thought Tommy Gillis would be interested in an Improvement Society.

JANE. Oh, he isn't probably. But he *is* interested in one member of it.

DIANA. You, Gertie?

GERTIE. (*Smiles self-satisfiedly*) Tommy said as long as I persisted in wasting my afternoons this way, he guessed he could stand it.

JULIA. You won't mind, will you, Gertie, if I tell Diana that you and Tommy have reached the *serious* stage?

GERTIE. No, I won't mind, Julia.

DIANA. *Have* you, Gertie? But I thought you had reached that stage last year—with Ham Coulter?

GERTIE. (*With a toss of her head*) Ham is the better-looking, but Tommy will have the most money.

DIANA. (*Scandalized*) Gertie Pye! What an *awful* way to speak!

GERTIE. I don't think so. I speak what other girls *think*, but don't dare to *say*.

JANE. Gertie believes that a girl's looks are her chief asset in life, don't you, Gertie?

GERTIE. Why not, Jane? Everybody likes to be rich, only I guess I'm franker than most.

(*KNOCKING is heard off L.*)

DIANA. (*Rises*) I'll see who that is. (*Exits c. to L.*)

JULIA. I do believe you've shocked Diana, Gertie.

GERTIE. Trouble with her is, she's been listening to Anne Shirley and her day-dreams too long. Day-dreamers never get *anywhere* in this world.

FRED. (*Entering c. from L. with TOMMY and DIANA*) Hasn't the meeting started yet? We thought we'd be late.

JANE. Not yet, Fred. It seems Marilla Cuthbert has been ill, and Anne's had to take care of her.

FRED. Oh, that's too bad! Nothing serious, I hope?

DIANA. No, I'm sure she'll be all right, Fred.

GERTIE. (*Rises and crosses to TOMMY*) Come and sit over here with me, Tommy. (*Leads him to window seat.*)

TOMMY. Thanks, Gertie. (*They sit.*)

DIANA. (*As she and FRED sit in the two chairs L. of arch*) It's an unexpected pleasure having you with us, Tommy.

TOMMY. Oh, I guess I'm not a real member. I'm just sort of sitting in, you might say.

JANE. But you'll help in our campaign, won't you, Tommy?

TOMMY. Well, what's the campaign for, Jane?

JANE. Why—I don't exactly know.

DIANA. Just wait till Gilbert Blythe comes down. He has all sorts of plans for beautifying Avonlea.

TOMMY. (*Grins*) It'll take a lot of work for *that*.

JULIA. It's a wonder Ham Boulter isn't here yet.

FRED. Oh, Ham Boulter isn't coming, Julia.

JULIA. Why not?

FRED. Why, he said he didn't think the Improvement Society was quite big enough for him and one certain other person.

(GERTIE squirms.)

TOMMY. That means me, I'll wager.

GERTIE. Well, never mind, Tommy. We'd *all* rather have you, anyway.

ANNE. (*Enters C. from R. with GILBERT*) Hello, everybody! (*FRED and TOMMY rise*) No, do sit down, please! I want you to make yourselves right at home. (*They sit again.*)

DIANA. Is Marilla feeling better, Anne?

ANNE. Yes, she seems to be resting now. She insisted that Gilbert and I come downstairs and go on with the meeting.

GILBERT. She'll be all right now.

ANNE. Oh, Diana, would you help me bring the tea and things in?

DIANA. (*Rising*) Surely, Anne. (*She and ANNE exeunt R.*)

JULIA. As President of the A. V. I. S., Gilbert, suppose you tell Tommy Gillis what some of our plans are.

GILBERT. All right, Julia. (*Turns the two chairs by fireplace so they face the OTHERS, and sits in the upstage chair*) Perhaps I can tell you best what our plans *aren't*, Tommy. There have been all sorts of stories already. For instance, Eben Wright told Anne that he wished the Improvers could induce old Josiah Stone to keep his whiskers trimmed—

JANE. Mr. Lawrence Bell said he would white-wash his barns if nothing else would please us, but that he would *not* hang lace curtains in his cow stable windows—

FRED. (*Grins*) And only today Major Spencer asked me if it was true that everybody would have to have his milk-stand handpainted next summer and keep an embroidered centrepiece on it.

GILBERT. Naturally, those are some of the things we're *not* going to do. I don't expect we'll get much accomplished this year, with winter coming on. But there's one thing I think we *can* do.

TOMMY. What's that?

GILBERT. I think we can start a subscription to re-shingle and paint the Town Hall.

GERTIE. It certainly needs it!

JULIA. I second that motion!

ANNE. (*Enters R. with DIANA. She is carrying a tray of teacups, and DIANA has a plate of bread and jam*) What motion are you seconding, Julia? Have some tea, Jane?

(*During the following conversation, ANNE and DIANA pass among the OTHERS with the tea and bread.*)

JULIA. To get the Town Hall fixed up.

ANNE. Why, that's a very good idea, I think, and it certainly needs it, but we can't make any motions or anything until the meeting is formally opened. This is just the social part of it, you know.

JANE. All right, let's talk socially, then.

JULIA. How do you like being a schoolmarm, Anne?

ANNE. To judge by my first day, I think I'm going to like it immensely, Julia.

GERTIE. I don't envy you, having to teach my little brother, Anthony.

ANNE. Oh, I'm sure we'll get along all right, Gertie. Has everyone had some tea now? (*She and DIANA put the plates on the table. ANNE sits down-stage of fireplace; DIANA sits with FRED.*)

TOMMY. I don't see what anyone *wants* to be a teacher for. I should think it must be awfully dull.

ANNE. Not I! I think it's the most un-dull thing there is. Though apparently Diana differs with me, and she's a teacher, too.

TOMMY. What's interesting about telling the same thing over and over again to a room full of stupid children?

ANNE. (*Indignantly*) Children are *not* stupid, Tommy Gillis—not any of them. Some of them may be—a little *misunderstood*, perhaps—

GERTIE. I'd like to see anyone understand my little brother Anthony—

ANNE. (*Flaring*) That's the trouble with people like you, Gertie: you make no *effort* to understand them. Forgive me for being so blunt, but I will *not* stand for anyone maligning children.

GERTIE. (*Tosses her head*) Oh, that's all right.

ANNE. As a matter of fact, there is one little fellow in my class who is brighter than a good many *adults* I could name—

GILBERT. Who's that, Anne?

ANNE. I don't believe you know him, Gilbert. His name is Paul Irving.

FRED. Oh, yes—the little son of that man from Boston.

ANNE. That's right, Fred. Well, I wish you all could see that child. He's simply adorable—

JULIA. How old is he, Anne?

ANNE. Oh, he's about ten, and so *pretty*, Julia. And not only that, he's a perfect little gen— (*Suddenly, the loud WAIL of a child is heard from off L.*) As I say, he's the most gentlemanly little— (*Again the WAIL is heard, and there is a KNOCKING at the door.*)

JANE. Goodness! What's that, Anne?

ANNE. (*Rises*) I'll see. Excuse me, please. (*Exits c. to L. Heard from off L.*) Why, Paul! (*Enters with PAUL; the latter is smudged with dirt, his shirt torn and his hair disheveled*) Paul Irving! (*She gasps.*)

TOMMY. (*Grins*) Is *this* the perfect little gentleman?

ANNE. Paul Irving! Whatever have you *done* to yourself?

PAUL. Please, Teacher, is Anthony Pye's sister here?

ANNE. Why, yes, she is.

GERTIE. (*Rises and crosses to him*) What's the matter?

PAUL. Please, Miss, I'm awfully sorry, but—well, you just better go outside and see for yourself!

ANNE. Paul Irving, what have you been up to?

PAUL. (*Hesitates*) I'd rather not say, if it's all the same to you, Teacher.

GILBERT. (*Smiling*) I should think it's pretty evident, Anne. He's been fighting with Anthony Pye.

(PAUL hangs his head.)

(WARN Curtain.)

ANNE. Have you?

PAUL. (*Pause*) Yes, Teacher.

ANNE. What about?

PAUL. (*Squirms*) Please—do I have to tell?

ANNE. You do!

PAUL. Well—(*Hesitates, then blurts it out*) He—he said he didn't like girl teachers and that you weren't worth a hill of beans!

(The OTHERS smother laughs.)

ANNE. Oh! Well, I—I'm disappointed in you just the same, Paul. You could have *argued* with him, without *striking* him.

PAUL. Yes, Teacher, but—it's pretty hard to argue with a fellow when he's got his hands around your neck, choking you.

GERTIE. (*Re-enters c. from L.*) I wish you could see Anthony. He's a sight for sore eyes.

ANNE. Where is he?

GERTIE. I sent him home. It'll take Ma weeks to get him looking natural again. Paul, I want to congratulate you—

ANNE. Please don't *encourage* him, Gertie. You'd better come with me, Paul. I'll see about getting you a little presentable.

PAUL. Yes, Teacher.

ANNE. (*Takes his hand and they cross R. At*

door) Get the meeting started, Gilbert, and I'll be with you as soon as I can. (*She and PAUL exeunt R.*)

GILBERT. I suppose we might as well. (*Rises*) As President of the Avonlea Village Improvement Society, I hereby call this meeting to order—

THE CURTAIN FALLS

ACT TWO

SCENE I

THE TIME: *Several weeks later, on a Saturday morning.*

THE PLACE: *The same.*

AT RISE: *It is a bright morning; the sunlight streams in through the window. MARILLA is discovered stretched out on the sofa, covered with blankets. RACHEL is seated in one of the fire-place chairs, which has been swung around so it faces the sofa.*

RACHEL. (*As the Curtain rises*) —and she died of it, spite of anything they could do. 'Course, hers was a little worse than your case.

MARILLA. (*Smiles wryly*) *That's a comfort!*

RACHEL. Don't see why you don't let Anne quit her teaching, like she wanted to, and stay home and take care of you.

MARILLA. (*Firmly*) Never! You don't know Anne if you say that, Rachel. Why, I do believe if she had to quit her school, it would break her heart.

RACHEL. How about *your* heart?

MARILLA. She's younger, and has her life to live. Furthermore, Rachel, she's going off to college next year, like we always planned.

RACHEL. If she goes off and leaves you here like this, it's liable to be your death.

MARILLA. (*Grimly*) She's going—even—if it is!

RACHEL. Marilla Cuthbert, you're the pigheadest female I ever knew, that's what!

MARILLA. Maybe I am. But—Goshen! The way you talk! I could be up walkin' around this very minute, if you all didn't baby me so.

RACHEL. I wouldn't care what you did. You could walk on your *head* this very minute, for all of me!

MARILLA. In that case, I *will* get up— (*Makes an attempt to sit up.*)

RACHEL. (*Pushes her back down*) You can when Anne gets home, but I'm not taking the responsibility on my head—not me!

MARILLA. (*Panting from her effort*) The—very—idea!

RACHEL. And I wish she would get back. If she thinks I've got the whole day to spend in this house—

MARILLA. Don't stay if you don't want to.

RACHEL. You don't think I want to? I'm only staying because I promised Anne I would. And her gallivanting all over town, canvassing for that fool A. V. I. S.!

MARILLA. It's not so foolish. They've accomplished a good bit in the last few weeks—got nearly enough pledged to fix the Hall up proper.

RACHEL. Don't tell me! Mr. Elisha Wright was right when he said a more appropriate name for them would be "Courting Club."

MARILLA. What are you insinuating?

RACHEL. Don't have to insinuate. A person only has to look at Gertie Pye and Tommy Gillis to know what's going on.

MARILLA. Gertie's Gertie, and would be, Improvers or no Improvers!

RACHEL. Yankee rubbish, that's what! Anne ought to be here this minute, instead of tracking up other people's parlors.

MARILLA. She's Chairman of the Fund-Raising Committee, and she's only doing her duty.

RACHEL. Well, let 'em get another Chairman! (*Rises and goes bouncing over to the window; kneels on window seat and looks out*) Marilla, I don't know how you can stand living off the main road.

MARILLA. *I like it here.*

RACHEL. Like it? But you never see what's going on.

MARILLA. (*Smiles*) Don't have to—not with you visiting here regular.

RACHEL. (*Peering out*) There's that awful Mr. J. A. Harrison—looking like the cat that swallowed the canary.

MARILLA. If he's going to swallow anything, I wish he'd swallow his parrot! That bird can make some of the worst noises—!

RACHEL. There! He's gone in now— (*Sighs*) And not another soul in sight. (*Gets down and sits on window seat*) He ought to be run out of town on a rail, that's what.

MARILLA. Mr. Harrison? He's got his good points, 'cording to Anne. They seem to've hit it off real well.

RACHEL. Anne always did take up with the strangest people.

MARILLA. (*With a smile*) She considers you one of her best friends, Rachel.

RACHEL. Mr. Harrison's a crank, for all that, and a lunatic, too, I shouldn't be surprised.

MARILLA. 'Cording to your way, anyone's a crank who's different from other people.

RACHEL. Rubbish! You should hear what little John Henry Carter, who works for him, says about him.

MARILLA. If he told it to you, I'll hear it all right!

RACHEL. (*Not to be side-tracked*) John Henry says there's never any such thing as a meal in that

house. He says when Mr. Harrison happens to feel hungry, he "gets a bite"—

MARILLA. Well, that sounds sensible enough to me.

RACHEL. And if John Henry's around at the time, he gets fed, but if not—then he just has to wait for Mr. Harrison's next hungry spell.

MARILLA. Seems to me, then, he'd learn to be around *all* the time.

RACHEL. Well, he says he'd starve to death, if it wasn't that he got home Sundays and got a good filling up, and that his mother always gives him a basket of vittles to take back with him on Monday mornings.

MARILLA. "The Lord will provide"!

RACHEL. And as for washing dishes, Mr. Harrison never makes any pretense of doing it unless a rainy Sunday comes. Then he washes them all at once in the rainwater hogshead and leaves them to drain dry.

MARILLA. (*Teasingly*) The man sounds like an inventive genius.

RACHEL. And that parrot! According to John Henry, there never was such an unholy bird. It *swears*!

MARILLA. Why doesn't John Henry's mother get another place for him, if he's so abused?

RACHEL. She tried to—the day the parrot bit a piece right out of the back of John Henry's neck when he stooped too near her cage. But she couldn't find another place.

MARILLA. You wouldn't condemn Mr. Harrison on what John Henry's mother says, Rachel? She's notoriously the biggest liar on the island.

RACHEL. I've seen a thing or two with my own eyes. Called on him last week, to ask for a contribution to Foreign Missions, and you know what he had the gall to tell me, Marilla?

MARILLA. What?

RACHEL. (*Indignantly*) He had the gall to tell me there were more heathens among the old women gossips in Avonlea than anywhere else he knew of—

MARILLA. He *did*?

RACHEL. And that he'd cheerfully contribute to a mission for Christianizing *them* if I'd undertake it!

MARILLA. (*Laughing*) I'm beginning to see why Anne likes him, Rachel.

RACHEL. (*Looking out window again*) Someone coming down the road, Marilla—

MARILLA. Who?

RACHEL. (*Peering eagerly*) Can't make out yet—someone I don't know—

MARILLA. Goshen! A stranger?

RACHEL. (*Disappointedly*) Oh, no! It's only Gilbert Blythe!

MARILLA. Yes, he's been out canvassing, too. Anne said if he came first, to ask him to wait.

RACHEL. (*Rising and crossing back to sofa*) She's been asking Gilbert Blythe to wait for years. 'Pears to me he'd get tired of it.

MARILLA. Gilbert's a real nice boy. They'll get hitched up one of these days—soon as Anne discovers what's been in her mind for years without her knowing it.

RACHEL. Well, Gilbert's all right in his way—he's an Avonlea boy, and *that's* in his favor—but Anne could do better if she looked.

MARILLA. Why, what's wrong with him?

RACHEL. He just hasn't got enough gumption—takes everything with a smile, 'stead of fighting for his rights once in a while.

MARILLA. (*Shakes her head*) Rachel Lynde, you'd find something bad to say about an Angel. You'd probably say its wings didn't match.

RACHEL. (*With a toss of her head*) If they didn't, I'd say so—and no one could stop me! (*The sound*

of knocking is heard from off L.) I'll let him in.
(Exits C. to L. Heard from off L.) Good morning,
Gilbert! (Re-enters, followed by GILBERT.)

GILBERT. (Tossing his hat on the clothes tree)
Good morning, Mrs. Rachel! (Crosses down to sofa)
And how's our invalid this fine morning?

MARILLA. (Annoyed) I'm not an invalid, and I
wish everyone'd stop calling me that. Why, I'm only
lying here this minute just to please Anne.

GILBERT. (Smiles) Of course you are, Miss Ma-
rilla, of course you are. And I'm glad to know
you're feeling so well.

RACHEL. Been out canvassing for the Improvers,
haven't you, Gilbert?

GILBERT. I have.

MARILLA. Anne asked you to wait till she got
back.

(GILBERT nods.)

RACHEL. Guess you been in a lot of houses this
morning, Gilbert?

GILBERT. Rather a few.

RACHEL. Then you must be just bustin' with news.

GILBERT. (Laughs) I'm afraid not, Mrs. Rachel!

RACHEL. (Disappointed) No?

GILBERT. Although my ambition has always been
to go in for journalism, I'm afraid you've got a bet-
ter nose for that sort of thing.

RACHEL. (Suspiciously) Are you speaking disre-
spectful of my physiognomy?

GILBERT. Oh, no, believe me!

MARILLA. He's only saying what everybody
knows, Rachel—it would be suicide for any news-
paper to set up in Avonlea in competition with you.

RACHEL. (Reassured) Well, if that's all—

GILBERT. In a way, though, canvassing for funds
is a liberal education in itself.

MARILLA. How do you mean, Gilbert?

GILBERT. Well, in calling on people for that purpose, you find out just how little you've known about them all along.

RACHEL. What'd you find out?

GILBERT. That every obstacle can be overcome, for one thing. Last week Anne and I called on the Dan Blairs—

RACHEL. Oh, them! She's an old skinflint, and the way she henpecks poor Dan! Why, he doesn't dare have his hair cut without asking her permission.

MARILLA. Let Gilbert tell his story, Rachel.

RACHEL. I'm letting him. Go ahead and tell it.

GILBERT. Well, we tied the horse and then rapped at the kitchen door. Nobody came, but the door was open and we could hear someone in the pantry, going on dreadfully—

RACHEL. I know—that was Mrs. Dan Blair giving her poor husband Hallelujah.

GILBERT. (*Smiles*) No, it was Mr. Blair himself, and when he came to the door he was red as a beet, with perspiration streaming down his face, and he had on one of his wife's big gingham aprons—

MARILLA. Oh, the poor man!

GILBERT. "I can't get this durned thing off," he said, "for the strings are tied in a hard knot, and I can't bust 'em, so you'll have to excuse me." He asked us to sit down, and then he said, "I'm a little busy, getting ready to bake a cake, as it were. My wife got a telegram today that her sister from Montreal is coming tonight and she's gone to the train to meet her, and left orders for me to make a cake for tea!"

RACHEL. What some people have to go through in this life!

GILBERT. Well, he said, "She writ out the recipe and told me what to do but I've clean forgot half the directions already."

MARILLA. A man would!

GILBERT. "And it says, 'flavour according to taste.' What does that mean? How can you tell? And what if my taste doesn't happen to be like other people's? Would a bottle of vanilla be enough for a small layer cake?"

RACHEL. A *bottle* of vanilla? Lor', what a cake that would have made!

MARILLA. What did you do, Gilbert?

GILBERT. I didn't do anything, but Anne got an apron and baked the cake for him.

MARILLA. (*Nods approvingly*) Good!

RACHEL. How about the subscription?

GILBERT. Oh, he put down for four dollars. So you see we were rewarded. But even if we hadn't got a cent, I'd always feel that we had done a truly Christian act in helping him.

MARILLA. Well, I should say! That poor little man! It's people like Dan Blair 'll get the warmest welcome when Gabriel starts his tooting.

RACHEL. I for one hope they leave Mrs. Blair out! (*Bounces over to window and looks out. Seeing nothing, comes back down again*) If you haven't got any more news, I'll be going about my business, Gilbert. You'll stay till Anne gets back, won't you?

GILBERT. Oh, yes.

RACHEL. Marilla, you stay in bed spite what I said. I—I didn't mean it! (*Tosses her head and bounces up to arch*) Goodbye! (*Exits C. to L.*)

GILBERT. (*He and MARILLA smile at each other*) It's a lucky thing her bite isn't as bad as her bark.

MARILLA. I guess I'm the only one who knows how big Rachel's heart is. Why, you know she never said a word when Timothy Cotton stole a crock of butter out of her dairy and told his wife he'd bought it from her?

GILBERT. I can guess she wouldn't.

MARILLA. Mrs. Cotton cast it up to her the next

time they met that it tasted of turnips, and Rachel just said she was sorry it had turned out so poorly! (GILBERT *laughs*) Well, Goshen, sit down and rest, Gilbert. Anne may be some time yet if she got talking to someone—you know how she is.

GILBERT. (*Sitting in chair RACHEL had used*) Well, shucks, Miss Marilla, I'd just as soon Anne never came if I can stay here and visit with you.

MARILLA. Now, that's a real pretty speech, Gilbert, but at my age I fear it's wasted. (*He laughs*) You'd rather save such speeches for Anne.

GILBERT. (*He becomes serious*) Anne? Why? She wouldn't listen to them.

MARILLA. (*Reaches over and takes his hand*) She listens to them more than you think, maybe.

GILBERT. (*Hopefully*) Do you really think so, Marilla?

MARILLA. (*Nods*) Why, certain! You just keep sayin' them to her, and she'll store 'em all up in her heart, to take out and look at some other time.

GILBERT. (*Smiles wryly*) I hope she doesn't put that time off *too* long.

MARILLA. Well, now, you're going to college next year, aren't you?

GILBERT. Yes.

MARILLA. Anne is, too—

GILBERT. But— That is, I thought, Marilla—

MARILLA. (*Firmly*) Anne is too! College lasts four years, and by that time, Anne and you 'll both be just about marryin' age. And, mark you, Gilbert, I'm counting on it, that's what!

GILBERT. (*Presses her hand*) I'll try not to disappoint you.

MR. HARRISON. (*Strides in c. from L.*) Harrumph!

MARILLA. (*Surprised*) Oh! Mr. Harrison! You did give me a start!

(GILBERT *rises.*)

MR. HARRISON. Oughtn't to leave your front door open, ma'am—it encourages burglars.

MARILLA. Burglars? Dear me, there hasn't been a burglary in Avonlea for more than thirty years.

MR. HARRISON. Watch out, then, ma'am—it's about time!

MARILLA. Well, will you sit down, Mr. Harrison?

MR. HARRISON. (*Looking at GILBERT suspiciously*) Who's this?

MARILLA. Oh, I thought you'd met. This is Gilbert Blythe—Mr. J. A. Harrison.

GILBERT. How do you do, sir?

MR. HARRISON. How do you do, how do you do? I don't do very well, I can tell you—

GILBERT. I'm sorry—

MR. HARRISON. You're not, and needn't pretend to be on my account. But I've heard of you, sir, I've heard of you. You're the President of that danged Reformers' Club, aren't you?

GILBERT. Yes, sir, but it's Improvers Club—

MR. HARRISON. Improvers or Reformers—it's all one. Busybodies, sir, busybodies—and you needn't expect a cent from me—not one cent, sir!

GILBERT. (*With dignity*) Very well, Mr. Harrison—I'll bear that in mind.

MR. HARRISON. Harrumph! (*Scowls, then extends his hand which he has been holding behind his back and discloses a bouquet of flowers. Thrusts them upon MARILLA*) Here, ma'am!

MARILLA. Why, how nice!

MR. HARRISON. They were cluttering up my fields, ma'am, and I thought they might as well rot here as anywhere.

MARILLA. Will you take them, Gilbert?

GILBERT. Surely. I'll get a vase. (*Takes the flowers and exits R.*)

MARILLA. Thank you very much indeed, Mr. Har-

ri-son. The flowers are pretty, even though the sentiment is not.

MR. HARRISON. Sentiment — sentiment, ma'am. Just so much rubbish! I'm not by any means a sentimental man.

MARILLA. (*Smiles*) I might say that is self-evident.

MR. HARRISON. Just so, ma'am! Where—har-rumph!—where is Miss Anne, ma'am?

MARILLA. Why, she'll be back directly, if you care to wait. She's canvassing this morning—for the A. V. I. S.

MR. HARRISON. (*Scowls again*) That again?

MARILLA. They've succeeded in raising enough money to paint the Hall and reshingle the roof. Most people gave very liberally, Mr. Harrison.

MR. HARRISON. Oh, indeed, indeed?

GILBERT. (*Re-enters R. Has the flowers in a vase*) I'll just set them here. (*Puts them on the mantel above the fireplace.*)

MR. HARRISON. (*To GILBERT*) What color are you going to have it?

GILBERT. Sir?

MR. HARRISON. The Hall, sir, the *Hall*!

GILBERT. Oh, we've decided on a very handsome green. The roof will be red of course.

MR. HARRISON. Who's got the job?

GILBERT. Mr. Joshua Pye of Carmody. We had to give him the contract, for every one of the Pyes--and there are four families, you know--said they wouldn't give a cent unless Joshua got it. Mrs. Lynde says they try to run everything.

MR. HARRISON. The main question is will this Joshua do his work well? If he does, I don't see that it matters whether his name is Pye or Pudding.

GILBERT. (*Smiles*) He has the reputation of being a good workman, though they say he's a very peculiar man. He hardly ever talks.

MR. HARRISON. He's peculiar enough, then—or at least folks here will call him so. I never was much of a talker till I came to Avonlea, and then I had to begin in self-defense—or Mrs. Lynde would have said I was dumb and started a subscription to have me taught the sign language.

(They laugh.)

MARILLA. I see you have made her acquaintance.

MR. HARRISON. I said I wouldn't give a cent to repainting the Hall, and bless me, sir, I won't! But there's a new notice board wanted and if you think—*(Reaches in his pocket)* Harrumph! If you think ten dollars is enough—*(Hands GILBERT a bill.)*

GILBERT. *(Astonished)* Why, Mr. Harrison! This is most generous—

MR. HARRISON. Generous? Generous be hanged, sir! That old notice board is an eyesore, that's what it is, a veritable eyesore, and it'll do me ten dollars' worth of good not having to look at it!

ANNE. *(Enters c. from L. with DIANA)* Dear me! We have company!

MR. HARRISON. Harrumph!

DIANA. Oh, good morning, all! How are you feeling, Marilla?

MARILLA. Good as a new toy, child.

DIANA. Well, I'm glad of that!

ANNE. Isn't it a lovely morning! With the odor of firs in the breeze! "Bliss it is on such a day to be alive; but to smell dying fir is very heaven!" There! That's two thirds Wordsworth, and one third Anne Shirley.

MR. HARRISON. All three thirds sound disgracefully sentimental to me!

ANNE. *(Laughs)* Mr. Harrison is a sworn enemy of all poets.

MR. HARRISON. To the death, Miss Anne, to the death!

GILBERT. *And* of decrepit signboards. Thanks to Mr. Harrison, girls, we're to have a new one for the Hall.

DIANA. Oh, how perfectly *wonderful*! Mr. Harrison, allow me to be the first to congrat—

MR. HARRISON. (*Squirms*) Stop it, Miss! Stop it, do you hear? I can't abide slush—not in any form, Miss!

(*They laugh.*)

ANNE. I have one bit of news that I know will make Mr. Harrison happy.

MR. HARRISON. Eh? Eh? Bless me, what's that, Miss Anne?

ANNE. Dolly will never trouble your oats again!

MR. HARRISON. Why not, girl? Have the Improvers been improving animals too?

ANNE. (*Laughing*) No, but I've sold her.

MARILLA. You've sold the Jersey, Anne?

ANNE. Yes. As Diana and I were driving past the west side of your farm, Mr. Harrison, we saw her in your oats again—

MR. HARRISON. Bless me, I've come to regard her as a fixture there.

ANNE. Well, you needn't any more. For Mr. Shearer of Carmody happened along at that very minute. He's been after me to sell him the Jersey, you know, and it made me so mad to see her in the oats, I let him have her on the spot.

DIANA. Anne *was* in a frightful temper at the poor cow.

MR. HARRISON. Well, a drastic remedy, Miss Anne—most drastic.

MARILLA. How much did Mr. Shearer give you for her?

ANNE. Twenty dollars.

MARILLA. (*Nods*) A fair price.

MR. HARRISON. (*Sighs*) Funny how a person can get accustomed to almost anything. Bless me, I'm almost sorry to hear her gone.

MARILLA. Anne, perhaps our visitors would like some tea.

ANNE. Of course, Marilla! I'll prepare it at once. Excuse me, please! (*Exits R.*)

MARILLA. Well, do sit down. You make me nervous, all standing there that way.

(MR. HARRISON *sits in armchair by sofa*, GILBERT *and* DIANA *in the window seat.*)

DIANA. Well, Gilbert, good luck in your rounds this morning?

GILBERT. I've pledges for eleven dollars—plus, of course, Mr. Harrison's ten for the new notice board.

DIANA. Anne and I have pledges for thirty-three.

GILBERT. That's marvelously good work, Diana!

DIANA. Oh, thank Anne, not me. She has a way that people simply cannot withstand. She should be traveling in trade, Marilla.

GILBERT. Do you realize we've enough now and more to do the Hall? This calls for celebrating.

MARILLA. We'll celebrate with the tea as soon as Anne brings it in, Gilbert.

MR. HARRISON. Next thing, you Improvers will be planting rosebuds down the middle of all the roads.

ANNE. (*Enters R., looking very sheepish*) Mr. Harrison, I have the most *dreadful* news—

MR. HARRISON. Eh? Eh? What now?

ANNE. I *know* I sold Dolly to Mr. Shearer, and yet—and yet— (*Hesitates.*)

MARILLA. (*Impatiently*) Well, Goshen, girl! And yet *what?*

ANNE. And yet she's sitting out in back, just as peaceful as she can be!

GILBERT. Oh, she may have broken away from Mr. Shearer—

MR. HARRISON. No, she did not! (*Rises, livid*) I'll tell you what you've done, you—you snippet!

ANNE. Oh, Mr. Harrison!

MR. HARRISON. You've sold my Jersey!

ANNE. *Yours?*

MR. HARRISON. Yes, mine, Miss—mine! My Jersey, that I was fattening up to win a prize at the Fair. There's no doubt about it, Miss—no doubt whatever— (*Shouts*) *You've sold my cow!*

QUICK CURTAIN

ACT TWO

SCENE II

THE TIME: *One week later; Saturday afternoon.*

THE PLACE: *The same.*

AT RISE: DIANA is discovered curled up on the sofa, reading a book. ANNE is seated at the secretary, industriously correcting some school papers.

DIANA. (*There is a pause for a moment or two after the Curtain rises; then she looks up from her book*) Aren't you finished correcting those papers yet, Anne?

ANNE. Almost!

DIANA. Well, it's past three-thirty, and the meeting is for four, you know.

ANNE. Yes. What's that you're reading, Diana?

DIANA. (*Looks at the book*) This? *Golden Keys*, by Mrs. Charlotte E. Morgan.

ANNE. Oh, yes! Isn't it simply *divine*?

DIANA. I don't know, Anne. She makes her heroines too perfect for words.

ANNE. Don't you think it's possible for people really to be perfect? Because I do. (*Looks up from her work*) I think it's a goal we should all aim for, and I think—

DIANA. (*Always the practical one*) I think you should get on with those papers, if you want to be ready for the meeting.

ANNE. Oh, all right. (*Turns to her work again. After another moment or two, she laughs.*)

DIANA. Now what?

ANNE. Did you know, Diana, that Thomas à Becket was canonized a *snake*?

DIANA. Whatever are you talking about?

ANNE. Rose Bell says he was—right here on this paper.

DIANA. That's nothing. Claude White in my class the other day said that a "glacier" is a man who puts in window frames!

(*They laugh.*)

ANNE. Aren't children *wonderful*, Diana?

DIANA. Well—in a way, I suppose. But they can be awful trying, too.

ANNE. But the *wonderful* times so much more than make up for the *trying* times.

DIANA. Perhaps.

ANNE. One day last week, I asked my class to tell me the things they most wanted—

DIANA. I'll wager you got some surprising answers to *that* question.

ANNE. Well, Hester Boulter wanted to wear her Sunday dress every day and eat in the parlor. Marjorie Donnell wanted to be good without taking any

trouble about it. And Sally Bell, aged ten, wanted to be a widow!

DIANA. A *widow*?

ANNE. Yes. When I asked her why, she said that if you weren't married people called you an old maid, and if you were your husband bossed you; but if you were a widow there'd be no danger of either!

DIANA. There's danger of your being late for your own meeting if you don't get on with those papers.

ANNE. I will directly. Just let me read you one of these compositions—I simply *must*! Where is it now— (*Looks through the papers on the desk*) Oh, here! (*Takes up one of the papers*) Listen, Diana. It's from Ned Blake, and it's called "Birds." (*Reads*) "Dear Teacher, I think I will write you a composition about birds. Birds is very useful animals. My cat catches birds. His name is William, but Pa calls him Tom. He is all striped and he got one of his ears froze off last winter. My uncle has adopted a cat. It came to his house one day and wouldn't go away and Uncle says it has forgot more than most people ever knowed. And my Aunt says he thinks more of it than his children. We ought to be kind to cats and give them new milk, but we ought not to be better to them than children. This is all I can think of at present about birds so no more at present from, Edward Blake Clay!"

DIANA. (*Laughing*) Well, he certainly has a lot of information about *birds*.

ANNE. Don't you agree now that children are truly wonderful?

DIANA. Yes, Anne—I'll agree to anything if you'll only—

(*KNOCKING is heard from off L.*)

ANNE. Dear me! Is that one of the Improvers al-

ready? (*Rises, crosses and exits c. to L. After a moment, she re-enters with PAUL*) Sec, Diana! A caller for Teacher.

DIANA. (*Frowns*) This is not the most propitious time for visitors.

PAUL. (*Who is scrubbed and dressed in his Sunday best*) Please, Teacher, would you rather I went home and came back at a more pro-pish-shus time?

ANNE. (*Indignantly*) Indeed I do not! This is indeed an honor for me, and the school papers may just wait for another time. Come, sit down, Paul, and talk to me. (*He starts to cross to chair L. of arch*) No, here on the sofa, please—you'll find it the more comfortable.

PAUL. (*DIANA makes room for him, and he sits on the sofa*) Thank you, Teacher.

ANNE. I'm sure you're welcome. (*Beams at him*) Would you like a nice piece of bread and gooseberry jam?

PAUL. Well—(*Hesitates*) I know I should be polite and say, "Yes, please," but my Grandma gives me so much to eat, that I'm always quite full.

ANNE. (*Laughing*) Then don't worry, for you'll not get a single bite to eat in *this* house.

PAUL. (*With a broad smile*) That's fine!

ANNE. (*Sits in chair facing sofa*) So your Grandma gives you enough to eat, does she?

PAUL. Indeed she does, Teacher! She says she brought my Father up on porridge, and he grew to be a fine man, so she gives me a bowl of it each morning about this big—(*Indicates a huge bowl*) I try very hard, to please her, but at first I could only finish about half of it, but now I *almost* do get through it.

DIANA. Have you no mother, then?

PAUL. (*Simply*) Only her picture, Miss. I scarcely remember, for she died when I was three—but her picture does *pretty* well.

DIANA. (*Compassionately*) That's too bad!

PAUL. Oh, no, Miss! My father's with me all the time—he writes books, you know—and my Grandma's not so bad. And I *do* have the picture—it's a beautiful picture, too, Miss.

DIANA. I'm sure it is.

(*KNOCKING from off L.*)

ANNE. (*Rising*) I'll see. (*Exits C. to L.*)

PAUL. If Teacher is having company, perhaps I'd better go.

DIANA. Oh, no—I don't think so, Paul. She'll tell you if she wants you to go.

PAUL. Yes, Miss.

ANNE. (*Re-entering with FRED*) It's Fred Wright!

DIANA. Why, Fred! I never knew you to be so early before.

FRED. There's method in it. I hoped to find you here, and I have.

DIANA. Me, Fred?

FRED. (*Nods*) I wanted to ask you, Diana, to have a little walk with me.

DIANA. A walk?

FRED. If you'd care to. I have some rather important news I wish to tell you.

DIANA. Oh—very well, in that case. (*Rises*) We shan't be long, shall we?

FRED. Oh, no—I'll have you back in ample time for the meeting.

DIANA. Then you'll excuse us, Anne?

ANNE. Why, certainly. You just go along and have a nice outing, both of you.

DIANA. Come, then, Fred. (*They exeunt C. to L.*)

ANNE. So now, then, Master Irving, we're entirely alone, aren't we? (*Sits on sofa with him.*)

PAUL. Yes, Teacher.

ANNE. Well, I'm very glad of this opportunity,

because there's something I've wanted very much to ask you.

PAUL. Why, what's that?

ANNE. It's a matter on which I'd value your opinion very highly. Do you think I'm a good teacher, Paul?

PAUL. (*Nods emphatically*) Oh, yes! I'm sure!

ANNE. Are you really?

PAUL. Even Anthony Pye thinks you're a good teacher—since that day you caned him in school.

ANNE. (*Winces*) Oh, don't mention *that*! It's something I'd resolved never to do, and it only happened in a fit of temper.

PAUL. (*Wonderingly*) Have you a temper, too, Teacher?

ANNE. (*Smiles*) I fear you'd be surprised if you only knew, Paul.

PAUL. Well, anyway, Anthony said afterwards he guessed you were all right even if you *were* a girl, for when you caned him, it hurt just as much as a man teacher!

ANNE. (*Laughs*) I'm glad to have won Anthony's respect—even by such unworthy means.

PAUL. Yes, Teacher.

ANNE. (*Looks at him for a moment*) You're a strange boy, Paul. You have no real friends, have you?

PAUL. (*Indignantly*) Friends? I do indeed! I have my Rock People— (*Immediately he has said this, he puts his hands to his mouth in dismay.*)

ANNE. Rock People?

PAUL. I didn't mean to tell you, Teacher. I've never told anyone about the Rock People—except Father and Grandmother.

ANNE. Well, now it's slipped, you might as well tell me the rest.

PAUL. Well—they live at the shore, you know, and I visit them every evening—

ANNE. Ah, yes!

PAUL. But pretty soon the winter will come, and then I won't be able to visit them any more until Spring. But they'll be there, I know—waiting for me—

ANNE. That's the splendid thing about them, isn't it?

PAUL. (*Carried away by his imagination, he has almost forgotten ANNE is there*) Nora was the first one of them I got acquainted with, and so I think I love her best. She lives in Andrews' Cove and she has black hair and black eyes, and she knows all about the mermaids and the water kelpies. You ought to hear the stories she can tell—

ANNE. I'd love to hear them!

PAUL. Then there are the Twin Sailors. They don't live anywhere. They sail all the time, but they often come ashore to visit me. They're a pair of jolly tars, all right, and they've seen everything in the world—and more than what is in the world. Do you know what happened to the youngest Twin Sailor once?

ANNE. What?

PAUL. He was sailing, and he sailed right into a moonglade—

ANNE. A moonglade?

PAUL. Oh, I forgot you didn't know about such things. A moonglade is the track that the full moon makes on the water when it's rising from the sea—

ANNE. Oh, yes! (*She has been regarding him with a bright, tender smile, and now furtively puts a hand up to her eyes.*)

PAUL. Well, the youngest Twin Sailor sailed along the moonglade till he came right up to the moon, and there was a little golden door in the moon, and he opened it and sailed right through. And he had some wonderful adventures in the moon, and—

(*Breaks off, noticing ANNE*) Why, Teacher! You're crying!

ANNE. No, I'm not—I'm not at all, Paul! I—I've something in my eye, you see.

PAUL. (*Frowns puzzledly*) That's funny!

ANNE. What is?

PAUL. Why, when I told Father about my Rock People, *he* got something in *his* eye, too. Isn't that odd, Teacher?

ANNE. (*Looks at him a moment, her eyes shining, then impulsively takes him in her arms*) You dear, dear boy! (*She holds him a moment, then releases him. He looks up at her, surprised.*)

(*KNOCKING from off L.*)

PAUL. (*Rises*) You're so busy today, I expect I'd better go, and come back some other time.

ANNE. All right, Paul. And you'll tell me some more then about your Rock People, won't you?

PAUL. If you like me to. I'll let them in on my way out. (*Crosses to arch*) Goodbye, Teacher.

ANNE. Goodbye, Paul. I'll see you Monday.

(*PAUL exits C. to L. ANNE quickly wipes her eyes with a handkerchief.*)

GILBERT. (*After a moment, enters C. from L. He is carrying a folded newspaper*) Why, hello, Anne! You've had a visitor, I see.

ANNE. Yes, he's the dearest little thing, Gilbert!

GILBERT. He seems like a nice, manly little chap. Where's Miss Marilla? Isn't she around?

ANNE. No, she's visiting Mr. Thomas Lynde, who's been poorly this past week.

GILBERT. Ah, that's why I haven't seen Mrs. Rachel about. And Marilla—is she feeling better?

ANNE. Yes, thank you, Gilbert. The Doctor says

if she wears her glasses always and doesn't tax her strength, her eyes may never get any better, but they'll never get any worse.

GILBERT. You must see that she does as he directs.

ANNE. I intend to do so. (*Noticing the newspaper*) What have you there, Gilbert?

GILBERT. Why, what do you think, Anne? *The Charlottetown Daily Enterprise* has printed those despatches we sent in!

ANNE. Have they really, Gilbert?

GILBERT. (*Nods excitedly*) They've given us a whole column under the heading: "Avonlea Notes."

ANNE. Dear me! They haven't used our names, Gilbert?

GILBERT. No, the column has been signed "Observer."

ANNE. That's a mercy. For, as I recall, we didn't exercise as much tact in writing the notes as we might have.

GILBERT. One or two of the passages might be called "controversial."

ANNE. May I see? (*He hands her the paper, and she reads*) "Rumor has it there will be a wedding in our village ere the daisies are in bloom. A new and highly respected citizen, whose initials are J. A. H., will lead to the hymeneal altar one of our most popular ladies." (*Nervously*) Oh, Gilbert! Fortunately, Mr. Harrison doesn't take the *Enterprise*.

GILBERT. Now that the die has been cast, do you suppose your excitable neighbor really does go to see Isabella Andrews?

ANNE. (*Laughing*) No, I'm sure he only goes to play checkers with Mr. Harmon Andrews, but Mrs. Rachel Lynde says she knows Isabella must be going to get married, she's in such good spirits this fall.

GILBERT. For the sake of our journalistic standing, I hope she's right.

ANNE. (*Reading from the paper*) "Uncle Abe, our well-known weather prophet, predicts a violent storm of thunder and lightning for the evening of the twenty-ninth of October, beginning at seven o'clock sharp. People travelling that evening will do well to take umbrellas and mackintoshes with them." (*They laugh.*)

GILBERT. Poor Uncle Abe! If one of his prophecies ever accidentally came true, I'm sure he'd be more surprised than anyone else.

ANNE. What would the farmers do without him? They're always able to judge the weather by going *contrary* to Uncle Abe's predictions.

GILBERT. Well, the twenty-ninth is in exactly one week. We shall see—

DIANA. (*Bursts in c. from L. with FRED. She is very excited. He is rather sheepish-looking*) Oh, I'm so glad no one is here yet but you two!

ANNE. Why, Diana! What's wrong?

DIANA. Wrong? Nothing is wrong! We wanted you to be the first to know. Fred and I have decided to become engaged!

FRED. (*Grinning uncomfortably*) Yep, we decided to take the fatal plunge!

ANNE. Oh, how *thrilling*!

GILBERT. Well, that's simply wonderful, simply wonderful! (*Slaps FRED on the back; shakes hands with DIANA.*)

ANNE. You know I wish you all the happiness in the world, Diana—and you, too, Fred!

FRED. Thanks!

ANNE. When is the wedding to be?

DIANA. As soon as the school year is out, Anne—probably in June.

ANNE. Then you're *not* going to college?

FRED. She's not. Diana and I talked it over, and

we both agreed four years is an *awful* long time to wait—too long for our tastes. (*He and DIANA smile at each other.*)

ANNE. (*After exchanging glances with GILBERT*) I shall miss you so at college, Diana—after the years we've planned about it, but—I do suppose you know what's best.

DIANA. I *hope* so, Anne. (*She and ANNE fall into each other's arms and cling together for a moment.*)

(*KNOCKING from off L.*)

ANNE. Oh, Gilbert, will you—?

GILBERT. Certainly, Anne. (*Exits C. to L.*)

ANNE. This is a day of surprises.

DIANA. It was quite unexpected for me, Anne. I never dreamed that Fred—

GILBERT. (*Re-enters with GERTIE and TOMMY*) Here are two more of the Improvers.

ANNE. Oh, welcome, both!

GERTIE. Hello, Anne and Diana! I suppose we're late, but I never knew any meeting yet to start on time.

TOMMY. You remember I came around that first day just to sit in, and here I still am.

ANNE. Well, I'm sure you're very welcome. Do sit down, all of you, won't you, and I'll see about the tea. (*Exits R.*)

(*DIANA and FRED sit on the sofa, TOMMY and GERTIE on the window seat, and GILBERT on chair facing the sofa.*)

TOMMY. Has Joshua Pye finished painting the Hall yet?

GILBERT. Yes, Tommy, it should have been finished yesterday.

GERTIE. Has anyone been around to the Hall since he started working on it?

GILBERT. Why, not that I know—unless Fred has.

FRED. Not I. It's so far out of the way, you know.

(*KNOCKING from off L.*)

GILBERT. (*Rises*) I'll see who that is. (*Exits c. to L.*)

DIANA. It should be a very handsome building in that lovely shade of green we picked out.

GERTIE. Oh, Joshua 'll do a good job of it.

(*GILBERT re-enters, ushering in JANE and JULIA.*)

JANE. Hello, everybody!

JULIA. Are we the last?

(*The OTHERS acknowledge the greetings, the BOYS rising until JANE and JULIA take the two seats L. of the arch.*)

JANE. Isn't Anne here? (*WARN Curtain.*)

GILBERT. Why, she'll be in directly, Jane. She's seeing about the tea. (*Sits in chair by fireplace again.*)

JULIA. Now that we've succeeded with the Hall, what's to be the next project on the program of the Improvers?

GILBERT. That's the purpose of this meeting—to discuss further steps.

TOMMY. (*Grinning*) I'd gladly start a subscription for a muzzle for Mrs. Rachel Lynde!

ANNE. (*Enters R.*) Well, I see we're all here, and tea won't be but a few minutes longer. (*Sits in chair next to GILBERT.*)

JANE. Shall we start the meeting while we're waiting?

GILBERT. Why, I suppose we might as well. *(Rises)* I hereby call this meeting of the Avonlea Village—

MARILLA. *(Enters c. from L.)* Good afternoon, all!

(They acknowledge the greeting, and the Boys rise again.)

ANNE. How is Mr. Lynde feeling, Marilla?

MARILLA. Not too well, Anne, not too well. Gilbert, didn't you tell me the Town Hall was to be painted *green*?

GILBERT. Yes, with a red roof. Why?

MARILLA. Well, I passed by there on my way home from Rachel's to look at it, and the roof's red, all right, but the Hall has been painted the brightest, most wonderful, awe-inspiring shade I've ever seen of—*purple*!

QUICK CURTAIN

ACT THREE

SCENE I

THE TIME: *One week later; evening.*

THE PLACE: *The same.*

AT RISE: *There is a violent STORM in progress outside. Terrific THUNDERCLAPS may be heard from time to time, and vivid LIGHTNING flashes seen. MARILLA is discovered seated on the sofa, knitting, while RACHEL is at the window anxiously peering out.*

MARILLA. *(After a short silence)* Do sit down, Rachel. You can't make the storm stop by staring at it.

RACHEL. Why won't it let up? I told my Thomas I'd be home before supper.

MARILLA. Well, I'm sure he's got sense enough to know you wouldn't venture out in *this* weather.

RACHEL. But he was feeling so poorly this afternoon.

MARILLA. There's nothing you can do *but* wait, and you might as well wait ladylike.

RACHEL. I suppose it *won't* stop any sooner for my standing here.

MARILLA. 'Course it won't.

RACHEL. *(Sighs)* Poor Thomas! He needing me, and me not there. *(Sits on window seat.)*

MARILLA. Oh, he'll be all right, Rachel. *(A slight*

pause, while RACHEL sits there, nervously tapping her foot) This storm will be quite a feather in Uncle Abe's cap, won't it? (RACHEL, *preoccupied, doesn't hear*) I said—won't it, Rachel?

RACHEL. (*Starts*) What? Oh, yes—Uncle Abe—yes, he does.

MARILLA. Does what?

RACHEL. Why—whatever you said he does.

MARILLA. You haven't heard a *word* I said. Goshen, sitting there fretting like that isn't doing anyone a bit of good.

RACHEL. I know it, Marilla, but I just can't help it—I just can't help it.

MARILLA. Well, anyway—here it is the twenty-ninth of October, and for the first time in his life, one of Uncle Abe's prophecies has come true.

RACHEL. That's right.

MARILLA. Started right on the dot of seven, too, just as he predicted. If that isn't the most *uncanny* thing, then I don't know!

RACHEL. Yes, it certainly is, Marilla—it certainly is! (*Kneels on seat again, looking out window.*)

(MARILLA *sighs; shakes her head disapprovingly. They sit there in silence for a few moments, MARILLA knitting, RACHEL looking out the window anxiously.*)

ANNE. (*Enters R. with DIANA*) There! The dishes are all done!

MARILLA. That was quick work.

DIANA. Oh, Anne likes to dawdle over them, but *I've* got a system!

ANNE. (*Severely*) Marilla! Knitting again! You know you're not supposed to strain your eyes.

MARILLA. Strain my eyes? (*Snorts*) I been knitting so many years on end now, I don't even *use* my eyes.

ANNE. Well, you take care.

DIANA. It is a bad evening, isn't it, Rachel?

(RACHEL doesn't hear her.)

MARILLA. Rachel can't hear you. She's too busy trying to scare the raindrops out of the heavens.

RACHEL. *(Turns to them)* What? Was someone addressing me?

(They laugh.)

ANNE. *(Crosses to window seat and sits with her. DIANA takes chair below fireplace)* Rachel, tell me again about that time you visited in the United States.

RACHEL. No, not tonight, Anne. I—wouldn't have my heart in it—

ANNE. *(Laughing)* Well, when Rachel can't find time to say a few bad things about the Yankees, that is something!

RACHEL. *(Looking out the window again)* Think I see a buggy pulling up—

DIANA. It couldn't be—on a night like this?

RACHEL. It is! They're stopping here! *(Twisting her head trying to see.)*

ANNE. *(Looking out)* So they are!

RACHEL. Lor'! It's my Sarah!

MARILLA. Are you sure of that?

RACHEL. Yes, it's she! She's coming in— *(Rises.)*

ANNE. *(Rises)* You stay where you are—I'll let her in! *(Rushes out c. to L.)*

RACHEL. *(Nervously)* What in mercy would she be doing over here on a night like—?

MARILLA. Now, just don't get excited, Rachel—don't get excited!

SARAH. *(Rushes in c. from L., followed by ANNE. She is dripping wet)* Oh, Ma!

RACHEL. (*Bounces over to her*) What's up, Sarah?

SARAH. (*Breathlessly*) Ma, you've got to come quick!

RACHEL. Is it your Pa?

SARAH. (*Nods vehemently*) He's been taken awful bad!

RACHEL. Mercy me! I knew it! I had a queer feeling in my innards! I knew I never should have left him! (*Crosses to clothes tree and gets her hat and coat.*)

MARILLA. (*Puts down her knitting and rises*) I'm going with you, Rachel.

ANNE. (*Alarmed*) Oh, no, Marilla! You can't! I'll go with Rachel—

MARILLA. You'd be more hindrance than help. (*Crosses to clothes tree.*)

ANNE. But—

MARILLA. (*Firmly*) I said I'm going, and nobody better try to stand in my way! (*She and RACHEL put their things on.*)

DIANA. What happened, Sarah?

SARAH. I don't know. Pa was laying in bed, and I was sort of sitting there watching him, and all of a sudden he got up a little bit, and said, "Sarah, you go get Rachel!" So I came.

DIANA. You hitched up the horse and drove all this way on a night like this?

SARAH. Yes, ma'am!

DIANA. You're a brave girl, Sarah!

SARAH. Oh, the horse really did all the work. He found the way all by himself, because *I* couldn't 've found it!

RACHEL. All right, Sarah!

SARAH. You ready, Ma?

RACHEL. Yes, we're ready.

ANNE. Now, *do* be careful, won't you, Marilla?

MARILLA. Don't you worry about me. Come on, now—we'd better get going.

DIANA. I'm sure you'll find it's nothing serious, Rachel.

RACHEL. Well, I hope not, but I had a feeling—I had a feeling in my innards! Well, come along!

(RACHEL, MARILLA and SARAH *exeunt* C. to L.)

ANNE. (*Crosses to window and looks out*) Dear me! I do hope everything will be all right!

DIANA. It will be, Anne—never fear.

ANNE. Marilla *never* should have gone. But you know it's simply useless trying to argue with her, once she's made up her mind. She's so stubborn! (*Sits in window seat.*)

DIANA. (*Laughing*) Aren't you the one, though, to be talking about other people being stubborn!

ANNE. (*Innocently*) Do you really think I am, Diana? That's funny—I've always thought I'm very reasonable, and can see other people's arguments as clearly as my own. Yet Gilbert says I'm stubborn, too.

DIANA. You haven't been seeing much of Gilbert lately, have you?

ANNE. (*Evasively*) Oh, I don't know—

DIANA. (*Pointedly*) Nothing *wrong* between you two, I hope?

ANNE. Well, to be truthful, Diana, our relations have been a little strained—

DIANA. What happened?

ANNE. I don't know exactly. But it's been going on ever since that day you and Fred announced your engagement.

DIANA. Dear me! What had that to do with it?

ANNE. Why, I suppose Gilbert thought he and I should follow the example that you set.

DIANA. And you refused?

ANNE. (*Nods*) Oh, I'm not criticizing you, Diana. But somehow, I feel—

DIANA. I know. It isn't exactly the way we planned it, is it, when we dreamed of our knights in shining armor?

ANNE. I think Fred is a *lovely* boy, Diana—simply lovely! But—don't you see, he's just Fred Wright! Just as Gilbert is only Gilbert Blythe.

DIANA. And you're still determined to wait for your knight?

ANNE. (*A radiant expression on her face*) Yes!

DIANA. But what if he never comes along?

ANNE. Then I'll die an old maid! Many people do, you know.

DIANA. Oh, dying an old maid isn't so bad, I guess. It's *living* an old maid that would have me worried.

ANNE. But you are happy with Fred?

DIANA. So happy! (*Giggles*) Though it does seem ridiculous to think of me being engaged.

ANNE. (*Curiously*) What is it really like to be engaged?

DIANA. Well—that all depends on who you're engaged to, I suppose. It's perfectly lovely to be engaged to Fred. But I think it would be simply horrid to be engaged to anyone else.

ANNE. (*Laughing*) There's not much comfort for the rest of us in that, seeing that there's only one Fred.

DIANA. Never mind, you'll understand some time—when your own turn comes.

ANNE. (*Radiantly*) Dearest Diana! I understand *now*—and I'm so happy because you're happy—And—(*Glancing out the window*) See, it's stopped raining! And we'll still be the best of friends, come what may!

DIANA. You must be my bridesmaid, Anne, you know. Promise me that—wherever you may be when I'm married.

ANNE. (*Solemnly*) I'll come from the ends of the earth if necessary!

DIANA. Oh, Anne! (*Giggles.*)

ANNE. What's the matter?

DIANA. Fred and I will be a dreadfully pudgy couple, won't we?

ANNE. (*Loyally*) That's better than one of you being short and fat, and the other tall and lean—like Morgan Sloane and his wife. They always remind me of the long and the short of it.

DIANA. Somehow, I wouldn't want Fred to be tall and slender—because, don't you see, he wouldn't be Fred then?

ANNE. Oh, Diana!

DIANA. What, Anne?

ANNE. You've just given me the most dismaying thought! Here I've been, trying to make a knight in armor out of Gilbert Blythe, when just as Gilbert he's one of the sweetest people I've ever known!

(*KNOCKING heard from off L.*)

DIANA. Now, I wonder who that could be—

ANNE. (*Rising*) I'd best go see. (*Exits C. to L. Heard from off L.*) Oh, good evening! Won't you come in?

EMILY. (*From off L.*) Thank you kindly! (*Enters C. from L.; looks around wonderingly. To DIANA*) How do?

DIANA. (*Rises*) How do you do?

EMILY. Is *this* where Mr. James A. Harrison lives?

DIANA. Oh, no! He lives across the road.

EMILY. (*Breathes a sigh of relief*) Well! I *did* think this place seemed too tidy—*much* too tidy for James A. to be living here—unless he has greatly changed since I knew him. Is he home, do you know?

DIANA. Why, you'd better ask Miss Shirley. *She* lives here.

EMILY. Miss Shirley?

ANNE. I *think* he's at home. I can't imagine him going out on such a night.

EMILY. *I'm out!* Is it true that James A. is going to be married to some woman living in this settlement?

ANNE. (*Starts guiltily*) No! Oh, no!

EMILY. But I saw it in an Island paper—

ANNE. (*Squirms*) Did you?

EMILY. A friend sent a marked copy to me. Friends are always ready to do such things. Here I've got it with me— (*Fumbles in her bag and fishes out a tattered press clipping.*)

ANNE. (*Nervously*) Oh, yes!

EMILY. Here, you can see for yourself. It says, "Rumor has it there will be a wedding in our village—"

ANNE. (*Interrupting desperately*) I *know* what it says!

EMILY. Oh—do you?

ANNE. That—that was only meant as a joke!

EMILY. A *joke*?

ANNE. I *assure* you Mr. Harrison is not married and has no intention of marrying anybody!

EMILY. Well! (*Looks at her for a moment*) I'm very happy to hear that—because he happens to be married already!

(ANNE and DIANA gasp.)

DIANA. Mr. Harrison married?

EMILY. (*Nods crisply*) I am his wife!

ANNE. Oh, dear me!

EMILY. You may well look surprised. I suppose he has been masquerading as a bachelor and breaking hearts right and left—

ANNE. Well, not exactly— (*Hastily*) I mean—he never *said* he was a bachelor—

EMILY. But he never said he *wasn't*, eh?

ANNE. No, ma'am!

EMILY. Well, well, James A.! (*Nodding vigorously toward the window*) Your fun is over! I am here—although I wouldn't have bothered coming if I hadn't thought you were up to some mischief. (*Turns to ANNE*) I suppose that parrot of his is as profane as ever?

ANNE. His parrot is dead!

EMILY. What!

ANNE. He passed away only this last week—of a choking fit.

EMILY. Dead! (*Jubilantly*) Why—everything will be all right, then!

ANNE. (*Perplexed*) I beg your pardon?

EMILY. I can manage James A. if that bird is out of the way! Thanks very much for the information. I can't stay another minute! (*Rushes out c. to L.*)

(*ANNE and DIANA look at each other quizzically, then they start giggling, and finally wind up in gales of laughter.*)

DIANA. Oh, did you ever see anything so funny in all your life?

ANNE. (*Weak from laughter*) No—no, I never did!

DIANA. I couldn't believe my ears when she said she was his *wife*!

ANNE. Poor Mr. Harrison! From the looks of her, I'll wager she can give just as good as she gets.

DIANA. I shouldn't be surprised. She certainly seems determined.

ANNE. She certainly does! (*Sinks down in sofa*) Oh, I thought I'd die!

DIANA. It's like something you read of in the

States, but who would expect such a thing right here in Avonlea?

ANNE. What thing?

DIANA. I mean—to think of him deserting his wife!

ANNE. (*Loyally*) But we don't know that he deserted her—

DIANA. Isn't that what you gathered from her conversation, Anne?

ANNE. Now, let's not be too quick to judge him. We don't know the rights of the matter at all.

DIANA. You know, you and Gilbert really are responsible for it, Anne—with that note in the *Chronicle*.

ANNE. I know. And Uncle Abe's prediction of the storm coming true—for the first time in his career as a prophet. That column in the *Chronicle* must have been bewitched!

DIANA. I only hope you and Gilbert never write anything about *me*—at least nothing bad.

(*WARN Curtain.*)

ANNE. Perhaps I have powers, Diana, I've never dreamed of. Perhaps— (*MARILLA enters c. from L.*) Oh, Marilla, you're back already!

MARILLA. (*Looking very solemn*) Yes, child—I'm back.

DIANA. Oh, dear! I do hope it's not bad news?

MARILLA. (*Sighs*) The worst!

ANNE. Oh, poor Rachel! Thomas is gone?

MARILLA. Yes, he passed away before we got back. I just came for a few things—I'm going right over to her again.

ANNE. Do you know—I believe Rachel *knew*. I believe she knew while she was sitting here, before Sarah came for her.

MARILLA. She said she felt in her innards—she felt he needed her—and he did.

ANNE. You mustn't let her reproach herself—there's nothing she could have done.

MARILLA. But *she'll* never believe it, Anne—she'll never believe it as long as she lives.

DIANA. Poor Rachel!

MARILLA. Well, she always did her duty to Thomas. She was a good wife to him—a good wife—and I'm sure he took that knowledge with him when he went.

(Suddenly, there is a particularly loud THUNDER-CLAP and a very vivid flash of LIGHT-NING.)

DIANA. Dear me! That sounded terribly close!

ANNE. *(Rushes to window and looks out)* It's struck! It's struck Mr. Harrison's house!

QUICK CURTAIN

ACT THREE

SCENE II

THE TIME: *The following day. Sunday afternoon.*

THE PLACE: *The same.*

AT RISE: *The stage is empty. Then, after a moment, there is the sound of KNOCKING from off L. There is another slight pause.*

DIANA. *(From off L.)* Yoo-hoo! May I come in?
(She enters C. from L.)

MARILLA. *(At the same time enters R. She is wiping her hands on a dishcloth)* Oh, you come right in, Diana. I was just going to see who that was knocking.

DIANA. How are you feeling this afternoon, Marilla?

MARILLA. Why, never better, Diana—never better! Anne isn't here. She said the autumn colors were so pretty down by the meadows, she just had to stay there and get her fill of them.

DIANA. They are gorgeous. I just thought I'd drop in for a minute on my way home.

MARILLA. Come and sit down, then. I'm going over to Rachel's soon as I get finished here, but I guess I've got a few minutes. (*Sits in sofa.*)

DIANA. (*Sitting with her*) I thought that service of Mr. Allan's today was very touching.

MARILLA. Yes, he's a right smart preacher.

DIANA. Oh, I noticed as I came in that Mr. Harrison's house seems practically as good as ever, despite the lightning.

MARILLA. (*Nods*) It's lucky they caught that fire in the attic as soon as they did.

DIANA. Mr. Levi Boulter wasn't so lucky. His house was struck, and it burned clear to the ground.

MARILLA. So I heard. They tell the storm did a good bit of damage all over the Island.

DIANA. I should say it did. Why, they haven't got the telegraph system in working order yet.

MARILLA. I met Uncle Abe coming from Church—

DIANA. Oh, did you, Marilla? I'll wager he's proud of his handiwork this morning.

MARILLA. Well, it might be doing him an injustice to say he's glad the storm had happened; but since it had to be, he's very glad he predicted it.

DIANA. He's *one* prophet who will be honored in his own country after this.

MARILLA. Well, I should think! Goshen! So *much* seems to have happened all at once.

DIANA. Hasn't it, though?

MARILLA. I understand there's a new Mrs. Har-

ri son, and I haven't had a chance to say a word to her yet.

DIANA. From the sight of her I got, you *will*, Marilla—or rather to *listen* to her.

MARILLA. Anne says she's quite a one. But since last night, I haven't had anything but Rachel on my mind. She was never the one to show her emotions, but she *feels* things as keenly as the next.

DIANA. I'll wager she does. (*Rises*) Well, I shan't keep you any longer, Marilla.

MARILLA. Don't rush off.

DIANA. (*Crossing to arch*) Yes, I must. There's so much to do at home—

ANNE. (*Enters c. from L.*) Why, hello, Diana! Have you seen the Autumn colors down by White Sands road? They've got me feeling all sort of rhapsodic inside!

DIANA. Why? They're just— (*Shrugs*) Just a lot of *colors*. You can see them any year.

ANNE. Yes, and great poems are just a lot of *words*, and words can be seen on any paper.

DIANA. Well, I've not time to argue with you, Anne. I'm just on my way home.

ANNE. Oh, must you go?

DIANA. Yes, but don't forget the Improvers meet at my house this evening.

ANNE. No, I'll be there.

DIANA. Goodbye until then! Goodbye, Marilla!

MARILLA. Goodbye, child!

(DIANA *exits c. to L.*)

ANNE. (*Crossing down to sofa*) Still here, Marilla? I'd thought I'd find you gone to Rachel's.

MARILLA. Yes, I'm leaving directly. But there's something I want to say to you first.

ANNE. Oh, what is it, Marilla?

MARILLA. Sit down, child. Here. (*Makes room*

for her and ANNE sits) You know that, though Rachel's always interested herself in various charities, she's not a rich woman herself—

ANNE. I know she's not.

MARILLA. Matter of fact, she's a mighty *poor* woman. And Thomas left her little or nothing—

ANNE. What are you getting at, Marilla? I know you've *something* in mind.

MARILLA. I have. There are just the two of them at home, now—Rachel and Sarah, and—well, there's so *much* room here at Green Gables—

ANNE. You want them to come live here? Is *that* it?

MARILLA. Yes.

ANNE. (*Smiles*) Well, you needn't have been so roundabout with it. Of course! I think it's a splendid idea—

MARILLA. Do you?

ANNE. (*Muses*) That is, if you think you can get along with Rachel. She's not the least difficult person in the world, you know—

MARILLA. (*Snorts*) Get along with her? Goshen, girl! I got along with her long before you were born. At any rate, it won't be *dull* with Rachel around.

ANNE. No, I don't believe it'll ever be *that*.

MARILLA. 'Sides, she'll do for company for me while you're off to college.

ANNE. (*Patting MARILLA'S hand*) Now, we needn't go through *that* again—

MARILLA. But don't you see, Anne, it's all *fixed*.

ANNE. Fixed? Why, how so?

MARILLA. Well, you haven't wanted to go for some silly fear of leaving me alone. But with Rachel in the house, I won't be alone— (*Laughs*) Not by a long sight!

ANNE. (*A slight pause*) Why—I never considered it in that light. I do believe you're right, Marilla.

MARILLA. Of course!

ANNE. And—why, the four years in college will be over in no time at all, and then I'll be back here with you, Marilla—for good!

MARILLA. Maybe. We'll cross that bridge at the proper time.

ANNE. Yes, I think it will work out, Marilla.

MARILLA. Then it's settled. (*Rises*) I'll go and tell Rachel so. (*Crosses to arch; gets her hat and coat from the clothes tree.*)

ANNE. (*Rises*) College! Am I really to go? I've dreamed about it for so long, and now—dear me, it's almost upon me!

MARILLA. (*Smiles*) Well, not quite—you still got most a year to finish out here.

ANNE. (*With the disdain of youth for time*) A year! What's that!

MARILLA. I've known a powerful lot of things to happen in less, girl. (*Has her hat and coat on by now*) I'll likely stay the rest of the afternoon with Rachel.

ANNE. All right—stay as long as you like. And Marilla—(*Runs to her and throws her arms around her impulsively*) You've been so good to me—so very kind!

MARILLA. (*Frowns*) Oh, bosh, child—bosh! Take your hands off me, can't you? Goshen! (*Pulls away from ANNE. Then, just before she goes, she gives her a tender, motherly smile*) Goodbye! (*Exits c. to L.*)

ANNE. (*Alone, she sighs happily; then the "dreamy" look comes into her eyes. She considers various alternatives for a moment, then adopts a queenly pose, and speaks in very regal tones*) Ah, Sir Gerald, you have come at last, I see.—That is good, for I have something I would tell you—(*Sighs*) Ah, me! I fear that this must end, Sir Gerald! Yes, end forever.—What? No, not another knight, but a commoner—a lowly commoner who

lives in Avonlea—one Gilbert Blythe by name.—Yes, even he— (*Draws back from "Sir Gerald" in dismay*) No, no! You may not kiss me! (MR. HARRISON and EMILY enter c. from L. and stand in arch) You may not! I will not permit it, do you hear—

MR. HARRISON. Well, bless me! At it again, eh, Miss Anne? At it again, I see!

ANNE. (*Starts*) Oh, Mr. Harrison!

MR. HARRISON. Well, this time he *didn't* kiss you, though, eh? Last time he did, you know.

ANNE. Why—what will Mrs. Harrison think?

EMILY. (*Smiles*) I'm sure I don't know.

MR. HARRISON. Day dreams, you know, Emily, my dear, day dreams!

EMILY. Day dreams—oh!

ANNE. Well—won't you sit down?

EMILY. Thank you, I'm sure. (*She and MR. HARRISON sit in the sofa. ANNE takes the chair down-stage of fireplace.*)

MR. HARRISON. We came by to thank you, Miss Anne.

ANNE. To thank me? But what for, pray?

MR. HARRISON. For being the cause and inducement of Emily coming back to me, of course.

ANNE. (*Innocently*) I, Mr. Harrison?

MR. HARRISON. (*Wags a finger at her*) Come, come! I've done a bit of snooping around, you know, and I found who the "Observer" was that wrote that piece for the *Chronicle*.

EMILY. (*Smiles*) And we're very grateful, I'm sure.

ANNE. (*Smiles*) Well, since the cat seems to be out of the bag—

EMILY. If there's anything you'd like me to do for you, Miss Anne, why, just name it, for I'm sure I don't know how I could've stayed away from James A. a minute longer.

ANNE. Well, then—I'm glad it happened as it did.

MR. HARRISON. You—harrumph!—you've a right to know how it happened.

ANNE. Oh, no! Please don't feel that you've got to—

MR. HARRISON. (*Holds up his hand*) We insist, don't we, Emily?

EMILY. Certainly, dear!

ANNE. Very well, in that case—

MR. HARRISON. Well—to make a beginning—Emily and I come from New Brunswick. We were married three years ago. I'd been keeping bachelor hall before that, and might 've been a wee bit untidy—

EMILY. (*Gasps*) A wee bit! Lord, you should've seen his place, Miss Anne. It was a sight never to be forgotten!

MR. HARRISON. Be that as it may, Emily fell to cleaning the place up. She cleaned morning, noon and night—

EMILY. (*Getting a word in*) I *had* to—to make it look the least bit human.

MR. HARRISON. She cleaned till one o'clock at night, and at four she was up and at it again. Far as I could see, she never stopped. It was scour and sweep and dust everlasting, except on Sundays, and then she was just longing for Monday to begin again—

EMILY. I like *order* about a house.

MR. HARRISON. I could have reconciled myself to that if she'd let me alone. But that she wouldn't do. She set out to make me over, but she hadn't caught me young enough—

EMILY. *Any* change would have been an improvement.

MR. HARRISON. I wasn't allowed to come into the house unless I left my boots at the door. I darsn't smoke a pipe for my life, unless I went to the barn—

EMILY. Just a few little *reasonable* things like that, and he objected to them.

MR. HARRISON. Well, we bickered along like that, and it wasn't exactly pleasant, but we might have got used to each other after a spell if it hadn't been for Ginger—

ANNE. The parrot!

EMILY. (*Rolls her eyes heavenward*) Oh, that bird!

MR. HARRISON. Emily didn't like parrots and she couldn't stand Ginger's profane habits of speech—

EMILY. Oh! You never heard anything like that bird in all your *life*!

ANNE. (*Smiles*) I *have* heard him—on occasions.

EMILY. Then you know!

MR. HARRISON. There's nothing I hate worse'n profanity in a human being, but in a parrot, that's just repeating what it's heard with no more understanding of it than I'd have of Chinese, allowances might be made—

EMILY. I couldn't see it that way.

MR. HARRISON. There you are! Women just ain't logical, that's what! Well, it went on that way, until finally—

EMILY. Finally, I got up and got!

MR. HARRISON. That's what she did—

EMILY. But now Ginger's dead—

MR. HARRISON. Yes, Ginger's dead, and Emily's back!

EMILY. And here I'll stay, James A., and I'd like to see you or anyone else make me leave!

MR. HARRISON. I have no intention, my dear, no intention whatever!

EMILY. Then that's all right! And fix your tie, James A.—it's popping half out of your collar.

MR. HARRISON. Yes, my dear—quite so! (*Fixes his tie.*)

ANNE. (*Smiles*) Well, I'm sure I'm very happy it all turned out so well.

EMILY. We'll both be everlasting grateful to you, Miss Anne. James A., pull up your trousers. I pressed them this morning, and they're all wrinkled up already.

MR. HARRISON. (*Pulls up his trousers*) There! You've heard it all now, Miss Anne— (*Mops his brow with a handkerchief*) I resolved to get it out of me, or bust. I didn't want you to believe I've just been sailing under false pretenses.

ANNE. Oh, I never thought that!

EMILY. (*Rises*) Come along now—we have some visiting to do.

MR. HARRISON. (*Rises*) Yes, my dear.

ANNE. Visiting?

MR. HARRISON. I'm taking Emily to see Rachel Lynde—to condole her on her bereavement.

ANNE. Why, that's very thoughtful, I'm sure.

MR. HARRISON. Besides, I've a hunch that Emily and Rachel 'll get along well together.

ANNE. (*Rising*) Yes, they do have much in common.

MR. HARRISON. (*Pokes her in the ribs*) Ha, ha! That's a good one, eh?

EMILY. What's the joke, James A.?

MR. HARRISON. Nothing—nothing, that you'd understand, eh, Miss Anne?

(*KNOCKING from off L.*)

ANNE. I believe there's someone at the door.

MR. HARRISON. Well, we must be going. You stay where you are, Miss Anne, and whoever it is, we'll let them in.

ANNE. Thank you, then.

EMILY. We shall be seeing a good bit of each other, I trust.

ANNE. I trust so too, Mrs. Harrison.

MR. HARRISON. (*At arch*) Come along, my dear! Goodbye, Miss Anne, goodbye!

(*EMILY crosses to him and they exeunt c. to L.*)

GILBERT. (*From off L.*) Oh, good afternoon, Mr. Harrison! Good afternoon, ma'am! (*Enters c. from L.*) Hello, Anne! Was that Mr. Harrison's new wife just leaving?

ANNE. (*Smiles*) Our wife!

GILBERT. Our wife?

ANNE. The wife of our journalistic enterprise, perhaps I should put it.

GILBERT. Anne Shirley and Gilbert Blythe—matrimonial problems neatly mended. (*They laugh.*)

(*WARN Curtain.*)

ANNE. (*After a pause*) I'm glad you came around today, Gilbert.

GILBERT. Are you, Anne? Why, I'm glad, too.

ANNE. You're not still angry with me, are you?

GILBERT. Oh, no, Anne—no! It will never be possible for me to be *really* angry with you—never!

ANNE. That's good! For I've been thinking—

GILBERT. Thinking of *us*, Anne?

ANNE. (*Nods*) And, Gilbert—do you recall what Diana and Fred Wright said the other day?

GILBERT. Yes!

ANNE. (*Shyly*) Shall—shall we be engaged, too, Gilbert?

GILBERT. (*Overjoyed*) Oh, Anne!

ANNE. You *do* want to be, don't you, Gilbert?

GILBERT. With all my heart! (*Draws close to her.*)

ANNE. Then we are! And we shall be married as soon as we've finished college—

GILBERT. *College?*

ANNE. For I *am* going. It's all settled. Rachel is coming to live with Marilla, and I'm going off!

GILBERT. (*In dismay*) But—but that's 'four years, Anne—four long years!

ANNE. No, four *short* years! The years are so short, Gilbert—so very short!

(*She stands there, looking radiantly into the future as:*)

THE CURTAIN SLOWLY FALLS

ANNE OF AVONLEA

PROPERTY PLOT

Bureau with mirror.
Clothes tree.
Table.
3 Straight chairs.
2 Armchairs.
Sofa.
Window seat.
Secretary.
3 Kerosene lamps.
Antimacassars.
Rug.
Window drapes.
Rubber plant.
Pictures.
Books, vases, etc.
Spectacles for MARILLA (in secretary).
Small book for ANNE (in secretary).
Tray with teacups (ANNE).
Plate of bread and jam (DIANA).
Blankets (on sofa).
Bouquet of flowers (MR. HARRISON).
Vase (GILBERT).
Paper money (MR. HARRISON).
Book (DIANA).
School papers (in secretary).
Pencil (in secretary).
Handkerchief (ANNE).
Newspaper (GILBERT).
Knitting (MARILLA).
Press clipping (EMILY).
Handkerchief (MR. HARRISON).

ANNE OF AVONLEA

PUBLICITY THROUGH YOUR LOCAL PAPERS

The press can be an immense help in giving publicity to your productions. In this belief we submit a number of suggested press notes which may be used either as they stand or changed to suit your own ideas and submitted to the local press.

The ——— Players announced today that arrangements had been completed with Samuel French of New York to present in this city "Anne of Avonlea," a comedy in three acts which was adapted by Jeanette Carlisle from L. M. Montgomery's famous novel of the same name.

The book, which has been read by millions since its publication some thirty years ago, relates the further chronicles of Anne Shirley who, as "Anne of Green Gables," has long been one of the best-loved of all fictional characters. In "Anne of Avonlea," she is now a grown-up girl of seventeen and a school teacher. Miss Carlisle's faithful dramatization of this long-time best seller has been hailed as one of the finest and most intriguing stage plays of its type ever written, and the ——— Players consider it a feather in their cap to have secured the local rights for its production.

Tickets will go on sale soon for the presentation of "Anne of Avonlea," which will take place on ——— at ———.

"In 'Anne of Green Gables' you will find the dearest and most moving and delightful child since the immortal Alice." So wrote the great Mark Twain, and millions upon millions of readers have been agreeing with him ever since. Then L. M. Montgomery wrote a sequel to "Anne of Green Gables," called "Anne of Avonlea," in which Anne grew up and became a school teacher, and this sequel became as famous and as well-loved as its popular predecessor.

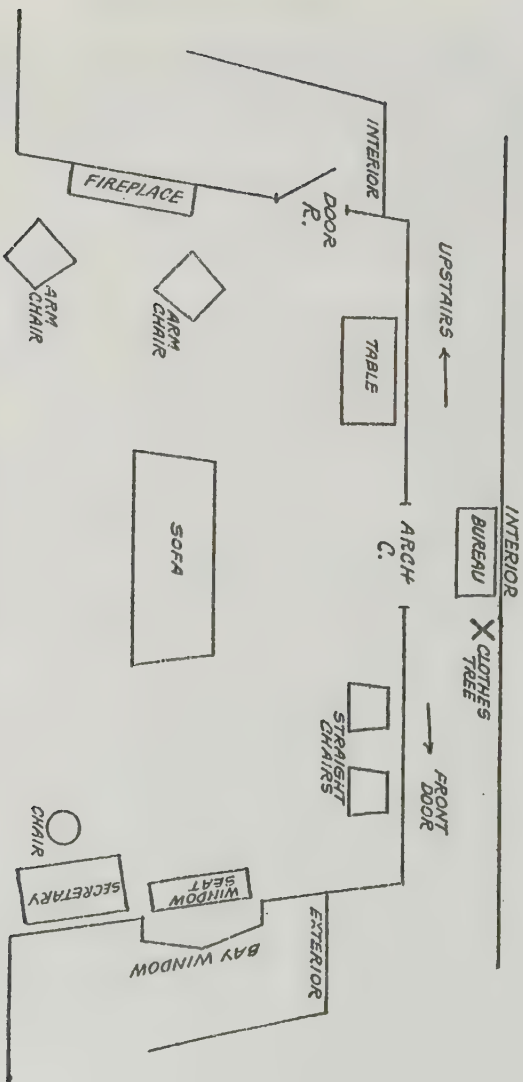
From "Anne of Avonlea," Jeanette Carlisle, the well-known playwright, recently made a faithful dramatization, a stage comedy in three acts, which has been hailed as one of the most significant and, at the same time, entertaining plays of its type to make an appearance in a long time. And it is this dramatization of Miss Carlisle's which the ——— Players are presenting here next month.

The ——— Players feel that "Anne of Avonlea" is one of the most ambitious and worthwhile productions they have ever attempted, and therefore urge all their friends not to miss the performance, which will take place on ——— at ———.

Casting has now been completed for the ——— Players' forthcoming local production of "Anne of Avonlea," the three-act dramatization by Jeanette Carlisle of L. M. Montgomery's famous novel of the same name. Miss ——— will be seen in the title role of "Anne Shirley." This will be Miss ———'s biggest and most ambitious part to date, and will afford her a rare opportunity to display her stellar acting ability.

In prominent supporting parts will be seen the following: ——— (List names of players.), while the entire production is under the personal supervision of ———.

Rehearsals are well under way, and it is expected the production of "Anne of Avonlea" will be one of the most successful in the annals of the _____ Players. The performance will take place on _____ at _____.



SCENE DESIGN
"ANNE OF AVONLEA"

TREASURE ISLAND

Ken Ludwig

All Groups / Adventure / 10m, 1f (doubling) / Areas

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THE SCENE

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- *New York Times*

"Rebeck's wickedly scathing observations about the sort of self-obsessed New Yorkers who pursue their own interests at the cost of their morality and loyalty."

- *New York Post*

"The Scene is utterly delightful in its comedic performances, and its slowly unraveling plot is thought-provoking and gut-wrenching."

- *Show Business Weekly*

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Jeanette Carlisle

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